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# Medieval Hostageship c.700–c.1500

Hostage, Captive, Prisoner of War,  
Guarantee, Peacemaker

Edited by  
Matthew Bennett and  
Katherine Weikert



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# Medieval Hostageship

## c.700–c.1500

This volume explores the issues of taking, using and being hostages in the Middle Ages. It brings together recent research in the areas of hostages and hostageships, looking at the act of hostage-taking and the hostages themselves through the lenses of political and social history. Building upon previous work, this volume in particular critically examines not only the situations of hostages and hostageships but also the broader social and political context of each situation, developing a more complete picture of the phenomenon.

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**MB: To my parents**

**KW: To Dr Parks, who got me here in the first place**





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# Abbreviations

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Aldhelm Poetic</i>     | Aldhelm of Malmesbury. <i>Aldhelm: The Poetic Works</i> . Edited and translated by Michael Lapidge and James Rosier. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985.                                |
| <i>Aldhelm Prose</i>      | Aldhelm of Malmesbury. <i>Aldhelm: The Prose Works</i> . Edited and translated by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979.                               |
| <i>Aldhelmi Opera</i>     | Aldhelm of Malmesbury. <i>Aldhelmi Opera</i> . Edited by Rudolf Ehwald, MGH Auctores antiquissimi 15. Berlin: Wiedmann, 1919.                                                     |
| <i>Annales Monastici</i>  | <i>Annales Monastici</i> . Edited by Henry Richard Luard. 5 vols. London: Longman, 1864–1869.                                                                                     |
| ASC                       | <i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation</i> . Edited by Dorothy Whitelock, with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961; rev. 1965. |
| Bain                      | Bain, Joseph, Grant Simpson and James Galbraith, eds. <i>Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland</i> . 5 vols. Edinburgh: Scottish Record Office, 1881–1986.                   |
| BAR                       | British Archaeological Reports, various titles, dates and authors. Oxford: Archaeopress.                                                                                          |
| Bede                      | Bede. <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> . Edited and translated by B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Minors. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969.                                              |
| Bower                     | Walter Bower. <i>Scotichronicon</i> . Edited by Donald Watt and Alan Borthwich. 9 vols. Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987–98.                                             |
| <i>Chron. Ed.I and II</i> | <i>Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II</i> . 2 vols. Edited by William Stubbs. London: Longman & Co., 1882–3.                                                      |

- Coventry Walter of Coventry. *Memoriale fratris Walteri de Coventria: The Historical Collection of Walter of Coventry*. Edited by William Stubbs. 2 vols. London: Longman, 1872–1873.
- CCR *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*, 42 vols. London, 1900–1947.
- CPR *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office*. 49 vols. London, 1893–1916.
- CR Close Rolls.
- Cal. Mem. Rolls *Calendar of Memoranda Rolls (Exchequer) preserved in the Public Record Office, Michaelmas 1326– Michaelmas 1327*. London: HMSO, 1968.
- Cal. Pap. Let. *Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland: Papal Letters*. 18 vols. London: HMSO, 1897–1989.
- Dethe *Death and Dissent: The Dethe of the Kynge of Scotis and Warkworth's Chronicle*. Edited by Lister M. Matheson. Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995.
- Dorset Procs *The Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. Various dates.
- EHD *English Historical Documents*, various eds. and dates, 12 volumes. Eyre & Spottiswoode, Oxford University Press, and Routledge. 1955–77.
- EPNS English Place-Names Society
- Feod. *Foedera, conventiones, litterae et cujusunque generis acta publica inter reges Angliae et alios quosvis imperatores, reges, pontifices principes vel communitates*. 3rd edition. Edited by Rymer, Thomas, and Robert Sanderson. The Hague, 1739–45.
- GHS *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*. 2 vols. Edited by William Stubbs. London: Longman, 1867.
- Gervase Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*. 2 vols. Edited by William Stubbs. London: Longman, 1879–80.
- Howden Roger of Howden. *Chronica magistri*. X vols. Edited by William Stubbs. London: Longman, 1868–1871.
- Kosto Adam J. Kosto. *Hostages in the Middle Ages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Malmesbury                | William of Malmesbury. <i>Gesta Regum Anglo-rum: The Deeds of the English Kings</i> . Edited by R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. |
| Melrose                   | <i>The Chronicle of Melrose Abbey</i> . Edited by Dauvit Broun and Julian Harrison. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007.                                                                          |
| MPCM                      | Matthew Paris, <i>Chronica Majora</i> . In <i>Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora</i> , edited by Henry Richards Luard. 7 vols. London: Longman, 1872–1883.                            |
| ODNB                      | <i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> . Unless otherwise referenced, online edition, 2004, <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com">www.oxforddnb.com</a> .                          |
| Paston                    | James Gairdner, ed., <i>The Paston Letters</i> , 6 vols. London: Chatto and Windus, 1904.                                                                                               |
| Patent Rolls              | Patent Rolls. Various editors, publication dates and places.                                                                                                                            |
| Peerage                   | Cokayne, George. <i>The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom</i> . Revised edition. 13 vols. London: St Catherine's Press, 1910–59.     |
| RRS                       | <i>Regesta Regum Scottorum vol II</i> . Edited by Geoffrey Barrow. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1971.                                                                         |
| Rot. Ch.                  | <i>Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati</i> . Edited by Thomas Hardy. London: G. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1837.                                                                 |
| Rot. Fin.                 | <i>Rotuli de Stis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi asservati, tempore Regis Johannis</i> . Edited by Thomas Hardy. London: G. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1835.                             |
| Rot. Lit. Claus.          | <i>Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi asservati</i> . Edited by Thomas Hardy. London: G. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1833–1844.                                              |
| Rot. Lit. Pat.            | <i>Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati</i> . Edited by Thomas Hardy. London: G. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1835.                                                   |
| PR [year of reign + king] | Pipe Rolls. Various editors and dates. London: Pipe Roll Society.                                                                                                                       |
| S                         | <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography</i> . Edited by P.H. Sawyer. Royal Historical Society Handbooks 8. London: Royal Historical Society, 1968.                  |



Stevenson, *Letters*

*Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry the Sixth, King of England*, 2 vols. Edited by Joseph Stevenson. London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1861–4.

TNA

The National Archives, Kew, England

Wendover

Roger of Wendover. *Rogeri de Wendover Liber qui dicitur Flores historiarum*. 3 vols. Edited by Henry Hewlett. London: H.M. Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1886–1889.

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KW: This volume began life as a strand at the 2013 Leeds International Medieval Congress, and I would like to thank our sponsors, the 15th Century Conference, the Haskins Society for Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Viking History, and the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies, for support and enthusiastic turnout to the sessions. Beyond that, my thanks go to all the contributors, from whom I have learned much; Eric Lacey for reading and commenting on various portions; and Ryan Lavelle for encouraging the volume in a number of ways. Ultimately, I owe a great deal of gratitude to Matthew Bennett for co-steering the ship with me, lending an immense amount of expertise, enthusiasm and advice.



# 1 The State of Play

## Medieval Hostageship and Modern Scholarship

*Matthew Bennett and Katherine Weikert*

Holding hostages in the medieval west was not an uncommon state of play. Hostages were taken and held as surety for various reasons: the holding of property, the promise of paying off debts, the securing of peace. Hostages could be taken for social reasons, if broadly read. The fostering of sons is a form of social contract involving the holding of a boy by another family to strengthen a network of alliances. Betrothals and marriages of daughters and sisters, especially in the cases of making treaties between warring factions, served much the same purpose as a hostage or a fostered son: a promise of peace held in the body of a person. Wardships of various kinds, of either minor children or widows, could equally be read as a form of social caretaking, a polite—and profitable—form of hostage. Of course, hostages were also taken and ransomed in wartime under martial conditions, and provided a tidy income for the keeper. Hostages under martial conditions could extend beyond the expected situation of the holding of knights and affect the vulnerable, for example, wives or children being held for the actions of husbands and fathers. And of course, hostageship could turn ugly. Hostages were killed, starved, mutilated and ‘disappeared.’ In social, political and military terms, hostages and hostageships were, if not common, then a regular occurrence.

Despite this, the secondary materials available on medieval hostages are surprisingly slim. In the last few years we have fortunately seen two solid monographs exploring the topic,<sup>1</sup> but this is merely a beginning. Gwen Seabourne and Adam Kosto have provided a foundation as well as a set of terminology, definitions, parameters and examples from which scholarship will spring. Previous to this, work exploring hostages or hostageship could be found in a handful of articles, but largely more in the mention of the action of taking or being a hostage as a part of another discussion. Medieval hostageship has undeservedly suffered from a lack of attention. If medieval hostageship was a regular state of being in the past, whence then this lack of secondary material?

There could be as many reasons for this as there were reasons for hostages in the Middle Ages. For one, the state of taking or being a hostage can all too easily be reflected in the modern mind as a part of the modern

constructions of hostages. Our world has all too many circumstances in which hostages have been taken that make us recoil with horror and anger when we come upon the word. Perhaps we think of the Israeli athletes at the Munich 1972 Olympics, of the Iran hostage crisis of 1979–81, of Daniel Pearl's death in 2002, of French journalists in Syria in 2014, of Daesh's beheadings of military and civilian hostages in the Middle East happening today as we write this chapter.<sup>2</sup> The taking and detaining of hostages is a regular occurrence in the modern world; we have these often horrific examples at the cusp of our media cycles and within our collective memory to call to mind at the word. Medieval scholars may not give another thought to stumbling upon the word *obses* in our manuscripts; unfortunately, for a wider audience the term hostage has a negative meaning. Today we know all too well what hostage means.

However, there is a significant difference between 'knowing' what hostage means in our own world and understanding it in the medieval context, which was seldom a reflection of current mores. Modern hostage situations are always crises with a clear expectation of violence, bodily harm and force;<sup>3</sup> medieval hostage situations were often a long-term social contract. As outlined above, a medieval hostageship could be undertaken for a variety of reasons, not all military or aggressive in their outlook, and hostageship in the Middle Ages could be as much about strengthening social ties as breaking them.

There is also a practical reason for our lack of attention to medieval hostages: it can be difficult to track them in the available evidence. When *obses* comes up in a record, we might assume that we 'know' what this means; but beyond that, this mention may be the sole piece of direct evidence for this *obses*, with little, if any, follow-up on the ins-and-outs of a particular hostageship. It is not always possible to trace individual hostages through the available records, particularly ones who are not famous or of high status. As opposed to doing more than reconstructing some of the more famous and extraordinary medieval hostageships, such as that of Eleanor of Brittany or Richard Lionheart, it remains easiest to simply see our *obsides* as hostages we might see in the modern world. In fact, the more extraordinary hostages that we have taken the time to know, such as Eleanor or Richard, are probably just that: out of the ordinary, and not necessarily standing as a paradigm for the larger phenomenon of medieval hostages. Beyond that, *obsides* are merely mentioned in our primary sources, and so we follow that mention with a mere mention of it in our own work.

Finally, there is a more ideological or even typological reason for our inattention to medieval hostages: it is incredibly difficult to simply *define* a medieval hostage in the first place. Can prisoners be considered hostages? Are hostages in groups different from individual hostages? Was the defining feature of a hostage being specifically called by that name, or can we see hostages outside of our *obsides*? How can we talk about medieval hostages if we have not yet come to a consensus about what constituted this status or position?

This last question is the hardest as it strikes true: there are indeed many ways of seeing and defining a medieval hostage. However, the question begs to be asked: by defining hostageship, will scholarship then be liable to ignore those that might fall outside of this definition? Too narrow a definition is undesirable for just this reason, but too broad a definition may dilute the field with examples of those who do not truly fall into the category. But there is still more at stake in the definition of a medieval hostage: a hostage or a state of hostageship in the medieval world was seldom a static situation but one that could be, and frequently was, fluid and changing. Hostageship was a state of being as much as a legal or social category; a state of being can be flexible and malleable. A man, woman or child taken as a hostage in the medieval past would be liable to a shifting status, and one that could be altered in many ways, during the time the hostageship continued or was terminated.

The research in this book extends the concept of medieval hostages and hostageships from previous legal definitions of the hostage. Indeed, this book overall is more concerned with the social and political impact of hostages than with legal definitions and categorization. And indeed, in attempting to see beyond narrow bounds of named *obsides*, two major themes emerge in the study of medieval hostages, moving into social and cultural reality in addition to legal parameters. The first is that a hostage, and the use of a hostage, could often be as much of a symbol or statement for the hostage-keeper as a position for the hostage. The second, more loosely, is that a hostageship could shift in its purpose and thus also its status and definition. Beyond this, though, there are a number of emerging themes that are built around medieval hostages: the possibilities of violence to a hostage, implied, threatened, or enacted; the gender and status of the hostage affecting their personal situation; the economics of taking, holding, caring for or ransoming a hostage; and, in many situations, the individual politics surrounding the situation of the hostage. All of these areas, and in many cases multiple intersections of them, are part of seeking to understand medieval hostageships.

The hostage as a symbol or statement is not an idea that has gone unnoticed, but the case studies in this volume represent new understandings and new exploration of the symbolic importance of the hostage. When momentarily setting aside questions of legal definitions, it becomes obvious that taking and being hostages created a new hierarchical structure between people in addition to the already-stratified medieval social structures in place. The state of hostageship itself creates a new social structure of authority, a social hierarchy between the hostage and the hostage-taker. Indeed, the state of being a hostage could many times serve to create a structural relationship between people rather than an actual, defined status for both. Within this hierarchical structure, the new power positions provided new opportunities of symbolic displays of these new social rankings. The hostage, then, was not only a form of personal surety but a way for the hostage-taker to

display his or her new ability to exact control over not just a person, but the greater societies or peoples that a hostage represented. The hostage became a symbolic representation for a greater whole, and the display of this symbol in the form of a person was a display of a new hierarchy, a new structural relationship between a lord and a subjugated people.

Thus, the importance of symbolism in medieval hostageship should never be underestimated. During a period of poor communications, when seeing the ruler's head on the currency might be the closest many royal subjects got to understanding who was in power, physical representations of authority were essential. In part this could be done by impressive buildings, both secular and ecclesiastical, or by royal progresses and the presence (when available) of royal officials, but for something as intangible as political influence, the presence of a personage spoke volumes. Hostages were literally paraded in front of both the political elite and the wider population. In 1064, Earl Harold, in fact if not *de jure* a hostage in Normandy,<sup>4</sup> was made to swear oaths across the duchy asserting his support for Duke William's claim to the English throne. After William's victory in battle and his coronation he took many of the leading men of England, 'velut obsides,' on a tour of continental possessions to demonstrate his newly-won authority, although the actual conquest of England lay years in the future.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, as Katherine Weikert explains, the Treaty of Norham in 1209 handed over the daughters of William I, King of Scots, to King John of England, as a demonstration of the vassalic relationship between them. A display of the princesses of Scotland, Margaret and Isabella, as a part of his court indicated John's dominance over not just Scotland, but also the Scottish king and family.<sup>6</sup> In Christian Ispir's words, the symbolism of hostage giving and taking was 'communicative' of political relationships, noting as well John's display of his Scottish hostages at the Feast of St John in 1213 as an exhibition of his post-Norham dominance over Scotland.<sup>7</sup> As Gordon McKelvie points out, Henry V used a similar tactic in making visual use of his captive James I of Scotland at Henry's marriage to Catherine de Valois and again at her coronation as queen;<sup>8</sup> in Alex Brondarbit's chapter, this volume, we see Edward V riding alongside his uncle-captor Richard, Duke of Gloucester, giving Richard both the veneer of respectable companionship as well as the display of his control over the young king.<sup>9</sup>

Alice Hicklin speaks of a 'mind-world' in which hostages represented political relationships, whilst doing harm to them awakened a remembrance of past betrayals and served as kind of penance for wrong-doing. In such situations hostages after their hostageship could retain powerful visual reminders of the power structure that they had endured: the hostages of Swein, disfigured by his son Cnut, served as a powerful reminder of the cost of breaking oaths in a society wherein physical disfigurement carried very particular meanings.<sup>10</sup> Ryan Lavelle speaks of early Anglo-Saxon hostages as a part of the 'material culture of kingship,' as visible symbols of power and 'humiliated props' of performances of royal dignity.<sup>11</sup> To Katherine

Barker, the symbolism could lie in a name alone: a 'helmet hostage' carried implications that the named person embodied an ancient contract which could also be found in the land itself.<sup>12</sup> Matthew Bennett also stresses the symbolic nature of hostages found in poetic sources as they were often in fact ephemeral, disappearing once the point of their mere existence was made: it was understood that sureties to agreements were required, but if the hostages were not necessary to the narrative then they could be dispensed with once establishing their presence.<sup>13</sup> Hostage exchange, even across religious boundaries, was simply such a natural activity that required no further exploration in the poem itself.

The symbolic nature of the person held hostage could and certainly did take on a great many political aspects throughout the medieval period. In the case of a crowned king, the royal body was held to be sacred and inviolate. This is true for the earlier part of the medieval era at least. But it is striking that from the fourteenth century onwards, in the British Isles at least, kings or nearly-kings such as Edward V were susceptible to covert execution. Edward II, Richard II, Henry VI, and the sons of Edward IV were all 'disappeared' when in the custody of a usurper. Indeed, to Brondarbit 'captive kings without a purpose were always killed,' a concept which would have been inconceivable to an earlier generation.<sup>14</sup> The question then is: what was the purpose of high-status captives? This must lead to a discussion of the political utility of hostageship.

For Brondarbit, the purpose of managing an imprisoned king was political influence. This might mean the broad possibilities of directing policy, the narrower one of distributing patronage, or a specific interest, such as 'controlling Lancastrian supporters still operating in France and the Low Countries.'<sup>15</sup> McKelvie's view of James I of Scotland is that: 'Once he was a prisoner it was political considerations that determined his life as prisoner;' control of James enabled Henry V to justify the killing of a Scottish garrison in France in 1420, since they could be declared traitor to their lord.<sup>16</sup> Ispir suggests that King John's hostage policy was 'menacing' to his barons, both on account of the number which he took and potential punishment by fining or imprisonment.<sup>17</sup> Hicklin even sees Norway controlled by a hostage policy that threatened life and limb if there was opposition to Danish rule.<sup>18</sup> By way of contrast, Lavelle proposes that the loss of status and particularly honour was more of a threat than physical attack, though within this chapter hostages are still seen as a part of a construction of early medieval kingship.<sup>19</sup>

Alongside the symbolic importance of the hostage highlighted above and throughout this volume, the research here also defies attempts to strictly confine the definition of a hostage, as the role and status of a medieval hostage were often shifting, ill-defined and overlapping with other roles that a person could play. Indeed as Gwen Seabourne (this volume) points out, medieval hostageship, never having 'a completely watertight and separate status,' was often a sea of shifting sands for the hostage and the hostage-taker, with



statuses changing in both legal and social ways.<sup>20</sup> When viewing a medieval hostage as a social status, rather than a legal one, parallels and comparisons to other roles become a necessity. Captives and prisoners are the most obvious examples; as Rémy Ambühl discusses, this volume, at times the statuses could morph from one to the other with relative ease,<sup>21</sup> but as Annette Parks demonstrates, at times the two offered very distinct sets of treatment.<sup>22</sup> Being able to differentiate between the two statuses could at times be crucial, but at others the two would be nebulous and hard to define with any certainty. The social importance or social capital of the hostage can also be considered as hostages would not simply be a political tool. Bennett's comparative sources in the twelfth century demonstrates that hostages would 'regulate relationships within conflict,' and also, probably surprising to a modern audience, that the military elites of Christian and Muslim societies shared values and hostage practices, demonstrating that the ethos of medieval hostageships was not only a western/Christendom concept.<sup>23</sup> Ispir considers hostages as a symbolic capital of a baron.<sup>24</sup> Weikert's chapter, this volume, on Margaret and Isabella of Scotland examines the princesses' travel with court as a social demonstration of power.<sup>25</sup>

Interestingly, the practice of fosterage, which could be functionally similar to hostageships at times, also served as an important means of assuring allies, developing kin links and avoiding conflict through feud. This was exactly the experience of William Marshal, who served his apprenticeship in the household of Patrick, earl of Salisbury. This is not to say he was a hostage as his sojourn was entirely voluntary, but his role was certainly that of building a beneficial political relationship between his father and a wealthy relative. The *Histoire de Guillaume le Marechal* represents the ties of loyalty which such service produced. When Earl Patrick is killed in a Poitevin ambush, William fearlessly risks his own life and is severely wounded defending his temporary lord. Interestingly, according to the poem, William is then rescued by Eleanor of Aquitaine, and in the time spent recovering from his injuries begins to form a profitable relationship with the royal family.<sup>26</sup>

Again functionally similar to hostageship at times, another aspect of such childhood experience was the practice of wardship. While intended to protect young heirs and heiresses through their minority, the system could have more exploitative aspects. Both Ispir and Weikert deal with these issues in the reign of King John, providing examples of how wardship could be managed by the king in order to benefit royal finances by running a competitive market for lords who wished to gain them and by fining those who refused the responsibility. More specifically, in Weikert's case of the Scottish princesses, the role of ward, honoured guest, hostage and 'marriage fodder' overlap intriguingly and, as in so many circumstances, almost defy categorisation.<sup>27</sup>

Female hostages had their marital state as an additional status forming their overlapping identities, and again the two areas could be difficult to

define with certainty; high-status women given to high-status men in varying guises as surety, to keep peace, or for fosterage as a child in a potential long-term marriage arrangement was commonplace in the medieval world,<sup>28</sup> and these practices muddy the water in viewing female hostageships and confinements. Indeed Adam Kosto, this volume, has pointed out that the situation of hostageships runs ‘parallel to that of individuals involved in marriage alliances,’<sup>29</sup> while Parks has noted the similarities in ‘the practices and ambiguities which governed both marriages and hostageships.’<sup>30</sup> In seeking to draw a strong boundary over what constitutes a medieval hostage, scholars can miss the nuances and vagaries of medieval hostageship, which often did not represent a static state of being but a fluctuating, shifting state dependent on a variety of options available to the hostage-taker. In the case of women, their statuses as the female sex, their place in the life-cycle, e.g., unmarried or not, and their social status could deeply affect their role in custody of another.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, this volume addresses strong issues of gender and status as emerging frameworks to consider hostages in the Middle Ages. As considerations of intersectionalities in gender studies have grown throughout historical studies, here too we see the fruitfulness of approaching the medieval hostage through this lens. Seabourne maintains that gender was always a consideration when it came to hostages, and in female hostages, varying statuses of marriage could further impact the female experience of being a hostage.<sup>32</sup> Parks clearly outlines the variations at play in being a male or a female high-status hostage or captive.<sup>33</sup> Brondarbit carefully explores the meaning of confining the king’s body, the highest-status male hostage in the medieval world, and how status was delicately negotiated.<sup>34</sup>

Another emerging theme from the volume is violence, though not in a way that would be expected to a modern audience accustomed to modern hostageships. In fact, violence as a tool against medieval hostages was both rare and very strategically used, though as Colleen Slater has previously noted, even ‘the implicit threat [to the hostage] was likely to produce results [with the hostage-giver].’<sup>35</sup> But the wide difference between a constant if implicit threat and the actuality of violence perpetrated against hostages is highlighted by the exceptions explored in the volume. Ambühl’s prisoners might expect a lengthy captivity in order to ‘take them out of the game’ of both war and politics, although they would not expect to be harmed.<sup>36</sup> Ambühl stresses the aspect of tolerance with which the victors conducted surrender negotiations with fortified places over which they won control, and this is consistent with approaches throughout the medieval period.<sup>37</sup> There was nothing to be gained by brutalising military opponents, or a wider civilian population unnecessarily—although the situation was different when a castle or city fell by assault; then the laws of sack applied. The story of the *Burghers of Calais* (1347) is often misrepresented in this regard. By requiring the hostages to appear in sack-cloth with halters around their necks, Edward III was humiliating them, but not harming them.<sup>38</sup>

Only rarely in this volume will the reader find examples of harshness of treatment of those who were kept in long captivity. Parks' study of the tragic experience of the children of Manfred of Sicily and Helena Angelina Doukaina, detained for life by Charles of Anjou, demonstrates that Charles considered them a strong political threat needing to be confined against their will.<sup>39</sup> The maltreatment and violence—or the rumours of violence—against the boys in particular sustain much of the unusual nature of the children's captivity; though an awkward concept for a modern audience, it could even be argued that Charles had been merciful in not killing Manfred's sons, especially in the light of Emperor Henry VI's apparent blinding and castration of the heir to the Kingdom of Sicily two generations earlier. However, although Manfred's sons were never to be allowed to emerge again, the queen and her daughters were treated more honourably. More specifically in the case of one daughter, Beatrice, the possibility of her being used in a marriage alliance made her a valuable asset.<sup>40</sup> Ispir also provides examples of similar long-term imprisonments, even unto death, at the hands of King John, although he was considered a tyrant at the time.<sup>41</sup> Hicklin's examination of the hostages of Swein and Cnut's English and Norwegian campaigns demonstrates that their mutilation, while possibly a part of a greater cultural understanding of the use of hostages, was also a strategic decision, a 'calculated act with multiple layers of meaning.'<sup>42</sup> Violence, though thought of in modern terms as an inherent part of hostageships, was not necessarily a given to a medieval hostage, and the level of violence inflicted on a hostage would depend on complex layers of their particular social and political needs and contexts.

The economic underpinning of hostage arrangements and its overlap with concepts of status and hierarchy are also made clear by a number of studies in this volume. Ispir, in his analysis of King John's exploitation on the system, considers hostages as the symbolic capital of a baron, e.g. their sons and heirs, being seized and kept in a state of uncertainty.<sup>43</sup> The sufficiency of the pledge also springs out from this aspect of a hostage relationship. Again, in John's case, his demands 'pro securitate de fino predicto' clearly represent this as a financial security. Unsurprisingly for such a suspicious individual, John was concerned that donors would provide hostages of little value, which undermined the value of such agreements, or even rendered them valueless.<sup>44</sup> Bennett also notes the significance of understanding value in the context of Christian-Muslim encounters.<sup>45</sup> Weikert and McKelvie both consider the actual cost of hostage-holding, especially in the context of hostages who were high-status and royal, and thus expensive to care for within a household.<sup>46</sup>

It is in the fifteenth-century examples that the financial expectations come most strongly to the fore, though. This is partly because of the overlap between the categories of hostage and ransomable captive, or the shift from one to the other. For example, although it was normal throughout the

centuries under discussion for surrendering towns or fortresses to provide hostages as surety, the fiscal value of such individuals is much more clearly defined in the later era. So, for McKelvie, the distinction between hostage and prisoner was mutable and on a shifting scale. In the case of King James, his status was recognised by the money spent on his captivity, while his role as hostage had implications for the non-payment of ransom; that was not necessarily the outcome required when negotiated peace was at stake.<sup>47</sup> Ambühl's analysis of the English surrender of Rouen, replete with details about the men who served as surety to the agreement, also brings the role of finance into even sharper focus. He demonstrates that there was a commodity market in the hostage-captives of Rouen, resulting in the selling-on of individuals to entrepreneurs who considered that their ransoms were a useful investment (although it turned out that some were not).<sup>48</sup>

Finally, and as should be apparent from this chapter alone, many studies in this volume have also played upon the difficulties and the questions of defining a medieval hostage. It should be apparent from the above that there was far from just one static category of hostageship in the medieval west. How hostages were understood and treated depended upon the period under discussion, the cultural and historical background to the situation, and most often on more immediate political concerns. Parks and McKelvie both examine the difference between a captive and a hostage, and the treatment that one could expect under both statuses.<sup>49</sup> Ambühl's hostages of Rouen interestingly change their particular status during their course of hostageship, necessitating a shift in treatment and a shift in perceptions about them.<sup>50</sup> Weikert and Seabourne both caution against defining too closely the term 'hostage' in the Middle Ages. Indeed, in the study of medieval hostages it is worth remembering that through the great portion of the period there were no set standards for hostages, nor a legal definition of either what constituted a hostage or how a hostage should be treated.<sup>51</sup>

This does not undermine the contention that the giving, taking, exchange and holding of hostages (even into the role of captives) was a near-universal activity in the medieval era in a number of political, military and social contexts. Hostageship was such a central part of life and politics that it in no way resembled modern understanding of 'hostage situations.' It also developed over time, bringing about different emphases in the hostage relationship. In the eight-hundredth year of Magna Carta it is especially worth remembering this, for while King John had abused the system, the barons abjured it. In the security clause, which established a counsel of twenty-five barons to bring the king to account, there is no request for hostages.<sup>52</sup> As Ispir points out, the charter, a written document witnessed both by signatories and a public ceremony, was considered sufficient: this was to be the future. Of course, John did renege on Magna Carta and hostages continued to have an important role for centuries to come, but the possibility of alternatives was never absent.

When viewing medieval hostages, all attempts to set boundaries, parameters and definitions have tended to be filtered through a modern framework in our best attempt to understand what being a medieval hostage meant to medieval society. This is, of course, assuming that there was a general understanding throughout the medieval world of what constituted a hostage, and how they were to be treated. By and large, though, this defies categorization. Many of the records of hostages are scant, as outlined above. It is possible that what it meant to be a hostage in the medieval world was so well understood by the rulers, the government and the administration that no further details were needed; as now, the state of hostages and hostageship might have been implicitly understood. But it is equally possible that the state of hostageship was also a transitive one in the medieval world, one that was even then ill-defined and shifting. Further social considerations beyond the legal would have also affected the label of 'hostage' in the Middle Ages; high-status women, for example, might have been slow to be given a label of hostage due to an uncertainty about the appropriateness for the label. The concepts of being a hostage, captive and prisoner were also transmuted and fluctuating, and the differences between the three, at times, not sharply delineated. Perhaps the reticence of the medieval records could be not always from a simple, general understanding of the status of being a hostage, but more from the uncertainty about what the term meant when it came to confining men, women and children.

Seeking, viewing and, crucially, understanding medieval hostages is never an easy task. The issues of record-keeping, in favouring the high-status male hostage over all others in addition to the scant records kept, has long affected our ability to 'see' hostages. But beyond that, a modern world in which we instinctively 'know' what it means to be or take a hostage has greatly coloured our ability or even our willingness to attempt to understand the state of being a medieval hostage. But we do not know what it means to be a medieval hostage. We have only just started to attempt to understand this state and this status. Previous works have built a foundation; monographs such as those from Seabourne and Kosto give a platform from which we can both view higher and dig deeper into the realm of the medieval hostage. A plethora of individual articles, found in various places over many years, gives us case studies or ideas to examine individually.<sup>53</sup> In moving forward in hostageship studies, it is time to further consider conflicting roles, transient states of being and intersecting power structures at play in medieval hostageships in order to more fully develop an understanding of the social, political, legal, economic and military uses of human surety in the medieval west. As opposed to finding solid ideas and definitions, the nuances of medieval hostageships are being brought to light. A medieval hostage was not a simple surety or a promise of good behaviour; a medieval hostage was also a strong symbol of a new hierarchical power structure that had been put into place. The

visual symbol of hierarchy in the form of a person was a powerful one. But a medieval hostage was also seldom a static thing; the shifting statuses of the hostage into prisoner, captive, ward or even wife demonstrates that the boundaries modern scholarship has attempted to place around medieval hostageships are false ones. Ultimately, becoming or being a hostage was a multi-faceted status and state in the medieval west.

## Notes

- 1 Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women: The Non-Judicial Confinement and Abduction of Women in England, c. 1170–1509* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Adam Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- 2 Kareem Shaheen and Ian Black, 'Beheaded Syrian Scholar Refused to Lead ISIS to Hidden Palmyra Antiquities,' *The Guardian*, 19 August 2015, accessed 20 August 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/18/isis-beheads-archaeologist-syria>. Khaled al-Asaad, head of antiquities at the site, was beheaded in front of the town's museum and his body hung from a column at the ancient site after being held hostage for more than a month.
- 3 The United Nations International Convention against the Taking of Hostages specifies a part of the situation of hostageship the '[threat] to kill, to injure, or to continue to detain another person (hereinafter referred to as the "hostage")': UN Doc. A/RES/34/146, 17 December 1979, 1§1, accessed 30 October 2015, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/34/a34res146.pdf>.
- 4 K. Cutler, 'The Godwinist Hostages: The Case for 1051,' *Annuaire Mediaevale* 12 (1972): 70–7.
- 5 Bennett, this volume, 81.
- 6 Weikert, this volume, 126, 131.
- 7 Ispir, this volume, 97, 126.
- 8 McKelvie, this volume, 164.
- 9 Brondarbit, this volume, 178.
- 10 Hicklin, this volume, 60, 63, 65–6, 69.
- 11 Lavelle, this volume, 50.
- 12 Barker, this volume, 15, 18–23, 26–8.
- 13 Bennett, this volume, 80, 83, 88.
- 14 Brondarbit, this volume, 183.
- 15 Ibid, 176.
- 16 McKelvie, this volume, 165.
- 17 Ispir, this volume, 93.
- 18 Hicklin, this volume, 68–9.
- 19 Lavelle, this volume, 38, 41.
- 20 Seabourne, this volume, 115.
- 21 Ambühl, this volume, 193, 199–200.
- 22 Parks, this volume, passim.
- 23 Bennett, this volume, 88.
- 24 Ispir, this volume, 99.
- 25 Weikert, this volume, 122, 125.
- 26 *Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal* II. 1552–1963.
- 27 Weikert, this volume, 123.
- 28 Fiona Harris Stoertz, 'Young Women in France and England, 1050–1300,' *Journal of Women's History* 12:4 (2001), especially 24–5; Annette P. Parks, 'Prisoners of Love: Medieval Wives as Hostages,' *Journal of the Georgia Association*

- of *Historians* 17 (1996): 61–83. Annette Parks, ‘Rescuing the Maidens from the Tower: Recovering the Stories of Female Political Hostages,’ in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, eds. Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (Burlington, VT: 2010).
- 29 Adam Kosto, ‘Hostages in the Carolingian World (714–840),’ *Early Medieval Europe* 11:2 (2002): 146.
- 30 Parks, ‘Prisoners,’ 72.
- 31 D. Jenkins, ed. and trans., *The Law of Hywel Dda: Law Texts from Medieval Wales* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1986), 58, refers to the rights of a woman ‘given as hostage into a country of strange speech, if she becomes pregnant by her kin and lord,’ implying sexual or marriage roles as well as the shifting statuses according to women due to the vagaries of life-cycle. Our thanks to Ryan Lavelle for drawing this example to our attention.
- 32 Seabourne, this volume, 108–9, 112–14.
- 33 Parks, this volume, 144.
- 34 Brondarbit, this volume, 174.
- 35 Colleen Slater, ‘“So Hard Was It to Release Princes Whom Fortuna Had Put in Her Chains”: Queens and Female Rulers as Hostage- and Captive-Takers and Holders,’ *Medieval Feminist Forum* 45:2 (2009): 14–15.
- 36 Ambühl, this volume, 192, 194, 197.
- 37 Ibid., 189–90, 192, 199.
- 38 Matthew Bennett, ‘Legality and Legitimacy in War and its Conduct, 1350–1650,’ in *European Warfare 1350–1750*, eds. Frank Tallett and D.J.B. Trim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 264–77.
- 39 Parks, this volume, 145–46; passim.
- 40 Parks, this volume, 141, 152.
- 41 Ispir, this volume, 100.
- 42 Hicklin, this volume, 66.
- 43 Ispir, this volume, 99.
- 44 Ispir, this volume, 98–9.
- 45 Bennett, this volume, 88.
- 46 Weikert, this volume, 125, 128, fn. 63; McKelvie, this volume, 162–4.
- 47 McKelvie, this volume, 158, 167–8.
- 48 Ambühl, this volume, 195–6.
- 49 Parks, this volume, passim; McKelvie, this volume, passim.
- 50 Ambühl, this volume, 189, 193.
- 51 Seabourne, this volume, 111, 115; Weikert, this volume, 122, 131. For a treatment of captives and prisoners of war as a separate entity in the later Middle Ages, see Rémy Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- 52 Ispir, this volume, 102.
- 53 In addition to already cited materials, for a selection see also Helena Sobol, ‘Use of Writing Space on the Franks Casket: Editorial and Linguistic Issues,’ *ANGELICA-An International Journal of English Studies* 23:2 (2014): 113–123; Lahney Preston-Matto, ‘Queens as Political Hostages in Pre-Norman Ireland: Derbforgaill and the Three Gormlaiths,’ *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109:2 (2010): 141–161; Christopher Lowe, ‘Image and Imagination: The Inchmarnock “Hostage Stone,”’ in *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-bourne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, eds. Beverly Ballin Smith, Simon Taylor and Gareth Williams (Leiden: 2007), 53–68; Dmitri Starostine, ‘Hostage by Agreement and the Language of Dependence in the Eleventh Century: Mutation or Corruption?,’ *Bibliothèque de l’école des chartes* 115 (1997): 119–148; Sean Duffy, ‘King John’s Expedition to Ireland, 1210: The Evidence Reconsidered,’ *Irish Historical Studies*



(1996): 1–24; Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Images of Women in Anglo-Saxon Art: I. Hostages: Women in the 'Titus' Scene on the Franks Casket,' *Old English Newsletter* 24:1 (1990): 44–5.

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## 2 Aldhelm “Old Helmet,” First Bishop of Sherborne, and His Helmgils, “Helmet Hostage,” First Abbot of Glastonbury, on the Dorset/ Devon Coast at Lyme

The Making of a West Saxon  
Bishopric

*Katherine Barker*

### Aldhelm and the Brittonic/Germanic World of Late Antiquity

The hostage as guarantee is a widespread if not universal practice in human history and was a regular instrument of diplomatic policy in the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Kosto notes that hostages feature in nearly every major politico-military development or event between the fifth and fifteenth centuries although, as he observes, sources for the seventh century are ‘famously sparse’ and largely restricted to the work of Gregory of Tours.<sup>2</sup> Aldhelm’s single reference to an *obses*, however, is not found in a work of history but in the dedication of a lengthy poetic work known simply as the *Carmen rhythmicum*.<sup>3</sup> This presents a unique, late seventh-century reference to hostageship and one which has not hitherto received attention. The context here is, however, one which can only be explored through the words of this complex, obscure literary text. Ostensibly a non-historical source, a closer examination of the figurative use of Aldhelm’s words set against his distinctive late seventh-century literary *milieu* throws unexpected light onto the geographical, political and not least the diplomatic underpinning which prompted the composition of a work designed for public recitation. As the subject of his dedication, Aldhelm’s *obses* may thus be understood as one of Aldhelm’s high-status colleagues, one who is designated his *casses obses*, his ‘helmet hostage.’

Aldhelm of Malmesbury, first bishop of Sherborne, is a tantalising figure, a man:

Prodigiously learned, pedantically prolific, he springs forth at the end of the seventh century as ‘England’s first man of letters.’ His prose treatise

*de Virginitate* and its verse counterpart, along with his lesser writings—a tract on metrics, a collection of *enigmata*, some letters and occasional verses—display an erudition and a command of Latin vocabulary not to be found since the great Latin fathers.<sup>4</sup>

Aldhelm was well-versed in the learning of the continental world of Late Antiquity. Appointed abbot of Malmesbury probably not before the early 680s,<sup>5</sup> Aldhelm received his early education in the Hiberno-Latin world. His career changed direction with the appointment of Theodore of Tarsus to Canterbury in 668 which brought, in effect, a Byzantine archbishop to Britain. Theodore fled to Rome as a refugee from the Arab incursions into the old Eastern Roman Empire. Appointed to Canterbury by Pope Vitalian, a known ‘Byzantinist,’ Theodore was charged with the re-structuring and re-organisation of the church in Britain with ‘the break-up of the old large dioceses and the corresponding increase in the number of bishops.’<sup>6</sup> Following Theodore’s appointment, Aldhelm joined his Canterbury school where he was brought up to speed with the learning of the Continental world.<sup>7</sup> Aldhelm describes Theodore as *quirites*, ‘citizen of Constantinople.’<sup>8</sup>

Recent archaeology has drawn attention to the fact that these were years of rapid economic growth in which the (re-)establishment of the Roman church in Britain was to play a significant part.<sup>9</sup> These years saw the establishment of coastal trading *portus* and a growth in continental, cross-Channel trading with Merovingian-style imports complemented by the increasing use of the silver *sceatta*.<sup>10</sup> Theodore would have been familiar with the episcopal trading syndicates of the Eastern Mediterranean,<sup>11</sup> which provided a context for the setting of Aldhelm’s poetic *carmen* and its hostage dedication. Along with the post-Roman West, the Byzantine world had inherited the practice of hostageship, not least with reference to ‘frontier’ peoples.<sup>12</sup>

Aldhelm was consecrated first bishop of the Sherborne diocese created on the division of Winchester, which was not effected until 705/6, fifteen years after Theodore’s death, a delay to which Aldhelm’s hostage reference offers an unexpected insight. Aldhelm was a vigorous promoter of the Roman Christian order westward into the *Dumnonian* south-western peninsula which, we know from his own words, already had trading contacts with the Byzantine world and was ruled by a Christian king named *Geruntius*.<sup>13</sup> The new West Saxon bishopric was set up at Sherborne, the settlement plan of which presents the outline of a high-status, pre-Saxon, British Christian foundation.<sup>14</sup> While owing his early education to the western Hiberno-Latin world, Aldhelm nevertheless declares that he is member of the *gens Germanicae*<sup>15</sup> and he would have been at least bi-lingual. There are echoes here of that ‘ethnic’ superiority acknowledged by the Byzantine world,<sup>16</sup> the ‘Christianising’ of this upright, moral people promoted rather less subtly by Bede a generation later. And it this *germanic* expansion which sets the scene for Aldhelm’s ‘hostage.’

## Aldhelm's Literary Style and Poetic Tradition

Aldhelm's career was to span the formative second half of the seventh century. A scholar of magisterial learning, he wrote in a notoriously difficult Latin style characteristic of the period. He himself refers to his *densa silva Latinitatis*,<sup>17</sup> his all-but-impenetrable forest of words. This, together with the fact that these works do not include anything 'factual' in the sense of the overtly historical, has seen Aldhelm rather confined to the edge of twenty-first-century scholarship. His literary *corpus*, not published until 1919, was to remain largely inaccessible until the translations of selected works by Lapidge, Herren and Rosier.<sup>18</sup> These have suggested useful points of entry and made possible a re-translation—and re-thinking—of several works which have yielded some tantalising insights into his world, not least that relating to his designated *obses*.

Aldhelm's reference to his 'hostage' is found in his role as *poeta, ymnista . . . auctor*, 'poet, hymn-writer . . . author,' also as *vates*: 'prophet', 'seer' or 'bard.' It is clear from his compositions that he was heir to a well-established oral tradition; his poetic *carmina* follow a long-established tradition in both Roman and Brittonic worlds in works composed for public performance; bards were as much poets as scholars trained in poetical composition.<sup>19</sup> His compositions allude to the challenges presented by the clearly Latin-fluent, educated western Christian Brittonic world. The *carmen* edition of his *de Virginitate* includes what may be understood as a 'copyright' statement: the Barking sisterhood were charged with performing his work as written. He derides those Latin-fluent *scurrae* wont to 'meddle' with his words.<sup>20</sup> In unlettered bardic tradition no performance was exactly the same twice. Aldhelm declares that it was through the use of approved texts that the *vates* were to compose, *cecinit*, poetic *carmina*. Latham notes that *vates* was duly to become 'Christian priest or prophet.'<sup>21</sup>

Aldhelm expresses similar concerns in his lengthy *epistola* to King Geruntius of Domnonia and his *sacerdotes* regarding that *strofusus*, 'wily,' Reader.<sup>22</sup> Probert notes that Aldhelm's letter to Gerent is clearly of fundamental importance to our understanding of contemporary relations between Dumnonians and West Saxons.<sup>23</sup> The poet (in this case Aldhelm) employed by those in positions of power was very much the 'media' of a pre-literate world where even an agreed Latin liturgy would surely present subtle regional differences in vowel sounds which could be cleverly employed. A member of an incoming *Germanic* generation, Aldhelm's (Roman) Christian emphasis was on *scriptura* 'that which is committed to writing.'

The result was the loss of generations' worth of British law and lore which was neither promoted nor patronised by that *gens Germanicae*. Aldhelm's generation played its part in the demise of that poetic, bardic tradition sustained by systematic training in techniques of *memoria*, bequeathing Anglo-Saxon England a 'Dark Age' not found in Ireland nor on the Continent. As Frank observes, the bard known in the medieval Celtic West had

disappeared without trace from Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>24</sup> Aldhelm—as literate scholar-poet—composed the *Carmen rhythmicum* in response to the fraught relations between Briton and Saxon; between *Domnonia*<sup>25</sup> and the making of Wessex, and thus presents a style of composition which would have been known to both parties. This is a *carmen* composed, *cecinit*, as he tells us, on his return from *Cornubia* and *Domnonia*, presenting us with what is in effect a diplomatic statement relating to his offering of a fellow colleague as hostage guarantee along a newly-instituted border.<sup>26</sup> A study of the *carmen* in its geographical setting suggests his *obses* was given as responsible for the maintenance of the new Roman Order, secular and episcopal. This is also a *carmen* that he composed ‘in his role not as *vates* but as *ymnista*: ‘I [the] hymnwriter have composed [this] epic verse’.<sup>27</sup>

### Aldhelm’s Dedication to One *Casses* . . . *Obses*, ‘Helmet Hostage’

Aldhelm’s *obses* is found at the beginning of his *Carmen rhythmicum*, which comprises 200 lines of verse written in a strict octosyllabic poetic metre.<sup>28</sup> Whilst it is impossible to ascertain the relative chronology of this work, there can be no doubts as to Aldhelm’s authorship; his poetic style derived ultimately from quantitative iambic dimeter verse found in Classical and Late Latin poems.<sup>29</sup> The narrative content of the *Carmen* is in a heroic epic tradition. Following the dedication he sets the scene and then takes the reader on a journey through the extremes of human experience. It records how Aldhelm and his company survived a dramatic Day-of-Judgement-style storm on their return from a delegation to *Domnonia* and *Cornubia*, when the well-appointed building in which they were worshipping all but collapsed in a hurricane-force wind.<sup>30</sup>

Following established tradition, he dedicated his composition to a high-born contemporary who is both disguised and designated here as his *casses obses*, ‘helmet hostage.’

Lector, *casses catholice*  
Atque *obses anthletice*  
Tuis pulsatus precibus  
Obnix flagittantibus  
Ymnista carmen cecini  
Atque rem sponsam reddidi  
Sicut ipdem pepigeram<sup>31</sup>

Aldhelm’s dedication is cast in the form of two Latin words *casses* and *obses*, paired with two Greek adjectives, *catholice* and *anthletice*: Latin *cassis*, ‘helmet’ and Greek *catholice*, ‘one with a universal significance’ or ‘that which follows the universal rule.’ A Latin *obses* is one who remains in place as a pledge for the faithlessness of another, and the Greek *anthletice*/*athletice* is

that pertaining to the athlete, a 'prize-fighter,' 'champion' or 'master.' The reference to fulfilling a project 'undertook so long ago' indicates that Aldhelm had clearly taken some time to deliver his promised work to his *casses obses*.

Lapidge and Rosier note that the English name underlying Aldhelm's word play is *Helmgisl* which, with customary metathesis becomes *Helmgils*, a name well attested in early English sources;<sup>32</sup> Latin *casses + obses* is Old English *helm + gisl*, literally 'helmet' + 'hostage.' The same OE *helm* element is also presented by Aldhelm's own name as OE *eald helm*, 'old helmet.' In Germanic tradition a prince was the *helm* of his people; Aldhelm's father was King Centwine.<sup>33</sup> Aldhelm, *poeta, vates*, here our *ymnista* and declared member of that *gens Germanicae*, duly presents a name with a royal Germanic warrior connotation, a status he shares with his *helm gils*. OE *gils*, 'hostage' or 'pledge' is someone who, as in the Latin, stands as guarantee, the passive participant accepted as standing surety. This is a name which points to Glastonbury: there is a persuasive case here for the identification of *casses obses* as Hæmgils, its first West Saxon abbot.<sup>34</sup> We are, in short, given to understand that Aldhelm is here following well-established Germanic heroic tradition in 'playing' with a dithematic OE personal name which, in presenting an alliteration with a colleague, in this case through OE *helm*, will imply a certain 'family' connection.<sup>35</sup>

As Sarah Foot notes, 'Three charters survive in favour of an Abbot Hæmgils which are assignable to the years 680–82; all three show signs of interpolation and corruption in transmission, but they appear to be based on seventh-century originals.'<sup>36</sup> Between them these charters present witnesses including Hæddi, Bishop of Winchester, Centwine and Aldhelm himself. All relate to grants of land in Somerset; all present a strategic significance which may be understood as relating to communications. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* notes that Hæddi became bishop and Centwine succeeded to the West Saxon kingdom in the same year, 676;<sup>37</sup> 'There is no reason to doubt that the first person named in the Tiberius B.v, Hemgils (for Hæmgils), should be identified as the first abbot of Glastonbury, although there is no acceptable evidence to indicate just when the minster of Glastonbury was founded.'<sup>38</sup> William of Malmesbury informs us that Hæmgils ruled Glastonbury for twenty-five years;<sup>39</sup> John of Glastonbury notes that Helmgils died in 705<sup>40</sup> which would present the year 680 for the beginning of his abbacy.

Alternative spellings presented for this 'hostage' designation, OE *helm-hæm-*, or *hem-* are such as to prompt further textual analysis with reference to those cryptic allusions which Aldhelm's words offer in his *Carmen rhythmicum* (below). A near-contemporary of Aldhelm, the Latin grammarian Virgilius Marus Grammaticus, alerts us to the fact that *nomina propria*, 'proper names,' are not to be read as mere noises, but as having a subtler interpretation: 'Virgilius' *modus operandi* is thus more subtle and less explicit than that of an . . . etymologist; he plays on his readers' [or listeners] knowledge.<sup>41</sup> And such subtler interpretations would be those *nomina*

*propria* used by Aldhelm. Our ‘knowledge’ here is one enhanced by beginning with Aldhelm’s factual, geographical references, against which these three OE name elements may be then considered.

### The ‘Helmet Hostage’ in a Geo-Allegorical Setting

The dedication presented, the *carmen* begins. Aldhelm is travelling in the south-west peninsula making reference to two real places, *Domnonia* and *Cornubia*.

Quando profectus fueram  
Usque diram **Domnoniam**  
Per carentem **Cornubiam**

Aldhelm begins with, ‘When I had set out/set forth,’ and then follows the names of two counties, Devon and Cornwall. The tell-tale word here is found in *usque*.<sup>42</sup> The strictures of this style of verse writing allow Aldhelm few words in which to convey his direction of movement and his destination. He is travelling *Usque Domnoniam*, ‘all the way to,’ ‘to the edge of’ Devon *Per . . . Cornubian*, ‘by way of’ Cornwall.’ This is clearly set somewhere on the coast: Aldhelm goes on to include a vivid description not only of the violently disordered sky but of the waves crashing against the cliffs and across the pebbly beaches.

The only coastal estate held by Sherborne providing a harbour for an otherwise landlocked bishopric was at Lyme on the Dorset/Devon border. A charter of 774 records King Cynewulf of Wessex granting one *mansio* [of land] *juxta occidentalem ripam fluminis . . . Lim vocatum est*, ‘up against/next to the west bank of the river . . . called the Lim,’ to the church of Sherborne for the purpose of *sal coqueretur*, salt production.<sup>43</sup> The wording of the charter places this single unit of coastal land neatly on the west bank of the River Lim. Complementary identification of this estate is nicely supplied by the bounds of the Glastonbury Abbey estate of [Up]lyme in 938, re-surveyed in 1516 (see Figure 2.1).<sup>44</sup>

Four *Lim*-named estates were registered in 1086 representing the division of a single well-defined land-unit based on the catchment area of the River Lim. This discrete geographical estate is divided between Dorset and Devon by the shire boundary; the former Sherborne *mansio* estate on the west bank of the Lim occupied a ‘spur’ of Dorset and Glastonbury holding the greater part of the Lyme hinterland on both sides of the shire boundary, 6 hides in Devon (Uplyme) and 3 hides in Dorset (Colway). A single coastal hide east of the Lim has bequeathed us the *Regis* of today. The coastal Sherborne *mansio* is all but surrounded by Glastonbury.<sup>45</sup>

Aldhelm’s epic *carmen* has been described as ‘an autobiographical narrative.’<sup>46</sup> The case has already been made that it is based on a real place and an actual event.<sup>47</sup> Aldhelm is, in short, providing us with an unexpected poetic

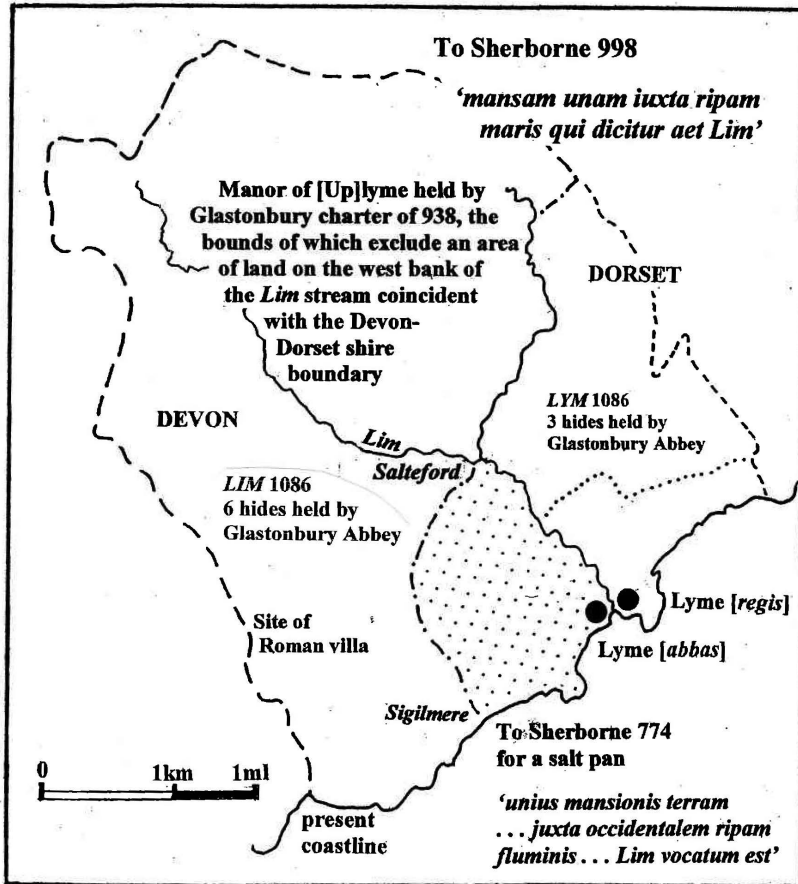


Figure 2.1 The hercology of the Lyme estate by 1086; the Sherborne episcopal *mansio* of AD 774 is shown stippled. Occupying a terrace above the eastern side of the deeply-cut valley of the River Lim is Uplyme Court Hall and a church dedicated to Sts Peter and Paul, which overlooks the site of the Holcombe Roman villa which occupies a terrace above the western side of the valley. Aldhelm observed that if the storm he describes in his *Carmen* had not taken place on the Feast Day of *Sancti Pauli* (29 June) they might all have been struck by lightning.

insight into the setting up of an episcopal trading community at Lyme on the Dorset/Devon border which was confirmed by charter a century later. The status of this estate is found here in its designation *mansio* (see below). Further, that the relationship of Aldhelm, 'old helmet,' with regard to his Helmgils, 'helmet hostage,' may be understood with reference to both their personal and 'territorial' relationship; the responsibilities attendant on the



making of a formal border marking the limits of British Devon and, it is suggested, coincident with the establishment of a Roman-style territorial bishopric instituted following the reforms of Theodore.<sup>48</sup>

Aldhelm himself alerts us to his distinctive literary style . . . he employs ‘the skills of four disciplines . . . history, allegory, tropology [the moral] and anagoge [the spiritual].’<sup>49</sup> From *historia*, chronological fact in time and space, we move on to *allegoria* ‘saying one thing but signifying another by way of similitude or antithesis.’<sup>50</sup> The Christian potential for creative, original allegory was very great.<sup>51</sup> St Augustine summed it up in that division between the literal and the figurative which is how the Bible is to be understood. That said, it was the *historical*, declared Augustine, which is the most interesting and significant . . . but the recording of historical events must have some purpose greater than the mere recording of facts . . . historical information must be read allegorically for the historical is itself allegorical. It was for the reader to explore and to interpret.<sup>52</sup>

### A ‘Helmet-Cum-Mitre-Shaped’ Estate

In short, it is possible to complement elements of Aldhelm’s figurative use of words with the historical geography of the Lyme estate which will assist our interpretation of his *casses obses*. Relevant to the geography of the *mansio* is Aldhelm’s wordplay on two pairs of words, *limina portum* and *discrimen duobus*.<sup>53</sup> Latin *limen*, ‘threshold,’ ‘border,’ refers to both the doorway of the collapsing building through which he and his company escaped which complements the more allegorical, that embracing an account of how members of a leading West Saxon delegation performed the Roman rite in a British church on the very edges of things, between two political spaces: a defining of borders legal, liturgical and linguistic. That *\*Portus limina* provides a context for the role and position of Aldhelm’s *casses obses*, Helmgils of Glastonbury. Aldhelm and his company make their escape just in time, effecting a safe and diplomatic solution to their predicament by *discrimen duobus*, ‘a dividing into two,’ scrambling ‘two by two’ up the steep and slippery slopes of this *ruris*, ‘country estate.’ It is suggested here that this is also an allusion to the literal ‘shiring’ of this hilly coastal estate; Lyme was formally *discrimen duobus* in the creation of a formal border with Devon.

Both Aldhelm and his Helmgils present a name in OE, *helm*. Sited on either side of the River Lim, the ground plan of that pair of Glastonbury estates listed in 1086 is not unlike that of a well-fitting helmet, *casses*, into which the wedge of Sherborne land intrudes from the base (Figure 2.2). Whilst scale mapping lay a long way into the future, it would surely have been clear to any informed traveller coming into the harbour at Lyme that whichever overland route he chose to take out of Lyme would lead up through Glastonbury land; the *portus* was ‘helmeted-in’ by steeply rising ground. Helmgils is that *casses catholice*, that all-embracing helmet on behalf of the ‘universal’ new Roman order. The ‘old helmet’ is holding the

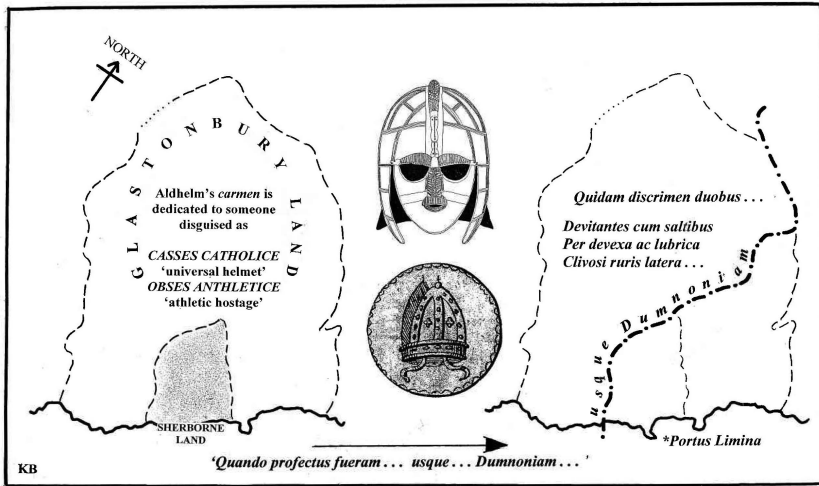


Figure 2.2 The 'helmet-cum-mitre-shaped' Glastonbury estate at Lyme on the Devon/Dorset coast: a geographical 'reading' of the dedication of Aldhelm's epic *Carmen rhythmicum* to one *Casses obsess*, a plausible candidate for whom is his colleague 'Helm gils,' first West Saxon abbot of Glastonbury. Travelling from Cornwall *usque Dumnoniam*, 'to the edge of Devon' Aldhelm declared the formal making of its boundary across a steeply-sloping estate *quidam discrimen duobus* 'which [being] divided into two.' Helmgils was thus standing 'border hostage.'

other 'helmet' hostage: *eald* carries with it connotations of honour, eminence, superiority. By implication here, Glastonbury was already holding this coastal estate before the arrival of the West Saxon rulers. Suffice to say, there is no record surviving this early; the only evidence here is Aldhelm's cryptic dedication set against a West Saxon Roman-style legal document a century later and the complementary estate geography thus implied.

It is here that Aldhelm's combining the name of his hostage with OE *hem/haem/helm* finds its context. William of Malmesbury renders the name of the first abbot of Glastonbury as *Hem-gisel*, one *Hemgillus abbas*.<sup>54</sup> OE *hem* is as today, 'hem,' 'border.' The Latin 'to hem in' is *obsidere*: *obsideo*, *obsedi*, *obsessum*, which also carries the meaning 'to surround, encompass, confine or besiege'—and which yields *obses*. And there is thus a further allusion here to the location of Glastonbury land in relation to that of Sherborne. Aldhelm's dedication is to someone who is a 'helmet,' at one and the same time being an OE (and Latin) 'hemmer in.' At Lyme, Helmgils is both a 'hemmer in' of Aldhelm at the same time as being 'held hostage' by him; the *portus* was hemmed-in by a Glastonbury-held hinterland.

Rendered as *Hæmgils* in the Glastonbury charters, OE *hæman* is 'to lie with,' 'to marry.' At Lyme the Sherborne *mansio* intrudes into the base of

Glastonbury, that helmet-cum-mitre shaped estate, complemented, as it were, by the attestation of the stem OE *gisl*, *gisel* which in Germanic languages suggests the association with the shoot of a plant, by metaphor with a scion or offshoot of a noble family.<sup>55</sup> This serves to draw attention to that trans-gendering presented here with Latin *casses*, a feminine noun, whilst *obses* can be either male or female.<sup>56</sup> In the later seventh-century Latin *mitra*, ‘mitre,’ was a Christian emblem of recent origin. Connoting a ‘pagan headdress worn by women,’ such was also associated with an effeminate man.<sup>57</sup> Aldhelm’s etymologising on Helmgils’ name may plausibly include those allusions made by the Roman satirist Juvenal to the ‘legacy hunter’ *Gillo* criticised for his base commercial and sexual motives.<sup>58</sup> And not omitting here that double-entendre presented by Latin *limus*, ‘clay,’ ‘mud,’ ‘pollution,’ in one of Vergil’s *Eclogues*,<sup>59</sup> nor that theme developed in Lucian’s ‘True Histories’ where there are repeated records of a sexual role for the hostage, male or female.<sup>60</sup> In Roman law a bishop, once established as head of a see, under the power of the *episcopalis audientia* had power of arbitration; his first task was to act as mediator or go-between.<sup>61</sup> The episcopal *mansio* was bordered by Glastonbury land to both east and west. But whether the Glastonbury abbot be rendered *Helmgils*, *Hemgils*—or *Hæmgils*—the geography of this pair of estates will accommodate all three.

Sherborne is, in short, ‘wearing’ a Glastonbury mitre ‘cut in two’ by a newly-agreed border. Unlike Glastonbury, Sherborne presents no archaeological evidence of early medieval mercantile activity;<sup>62</sup> those links with the Eastern Mediterranean world reflected in Aldhelm’s writing. But which presents a settlement plan understood as that of a high-status British ecclesiastical *lan*-designated foundation \**Lanprobus* plausibly presenting a British/Byzantine connection in its dedication/founder, one *Probus*.<sup>63</sup> It is suggested here that having been granted management of its trading routes, Glastonbury was to be divested not only of its earlier British episcopal status but of a lucrative length of south, continental-facing coastline. A *portus* for the new, landlocked West Saxon bishopric was, by implication, removed from an already existing Glastonbury estate. This would also be a *portus* established on an administrative border, like others on the other side of the Channel.<sup>64</sup>

### Hostageship and the Christian World: The Making of the Sherborne Bishopric

Hostageship was a well-established practice in the Continental world of Late Antiquity and formed a ‘type scene’ in Late Antique narrative.<sup>65</sup> An early medieval link between hostage-taking and the establishment of a legal border has also been noted in a Continental context by Laura Carlson.<sup>66</sup> Aldhelm studied Roman law at Canterbury<sup>67</sup> and with his Hiberno-Latin background he was surely also acquainted with the hostage, *gíall*, also found in early Irish law.<sup>68</sup> As Kosto observes, the practice of hostageship is

best understood in the context of shifting structures of power; in the case here studied, not only with reference to the British West and the Roman church, but between two high-born, high-status, West Saxon clerics: 'Hostageships were practices of alliance that shaped the contemporary political landscape';<sup>69</sup> in this case both literally *and* allegorically.

Following the *discrimen duobus* Helmgils not only had a foothold either side of the newly-established border with Devon but on either side of the Sherborne coastal *mansio*. The *mansio* is a well-evidenced legal term in a Merovingian context carrying a commercial significance.<sup>70</sup> Such will complement the wider picture drawn by Hodges:<sup>71</sup> the importance of the church in the economic growth of the later seventh century of which the establishment of the Sherborne diocesan coastal *mansio* may be seen as a complementary part. Christianity operated commercial networks;<sup>72</sup> the connotations here are that the episcopal *mansio* at Lyme, \**Portus limina*, was to serve the new West Saxon bishopric. Theodore, with whom Aldhelm trained at Canterbury, would have been familiar with the trading syndicates of the Eastern Mediterranean world. In the old Eastern Empire the association between the church and *mansiones* was to serve travellers; *mansiones* located near frontiers became centres of refuge during border conflicts.<sup>73</sup> Sited on the bank of the River Lim the Sherborne *mansio* was bordered by Glastonbury land to both east and west.

Aldhelm's *discrimen* may be understood as reference to the Devon/Dorset shire boundary which 'cuts across' this discrete coastal estate bordering the Sherborne *mansio*, today marked by a prominent boundary bank following a distinctly manmade course across the high ground west of Lyme and down to the Lim at the *salteforde* of the 938 charter (Figure 2.1).<sup>74</sup> Helmgils' 'hostageship' is thus cryptically related to the formal shiring of these two counties. We may be given to understand that Aldhelm's *carmen* was composed to mark his return from a Roman-style 'diplomatic envoy' to *Dumnonia*, to establish a *foedus*, 'working treaty,' associated here with the maintenance of an open, but controlled trading frontier.<sup>75</sup>

It has recently been suggested that Helmgils' hostageship was not solely that relating to his standing surety on the borders of a newly-instituted shire, that episcopal *mansio*, but in relation to the making of the Sherborne bishopric-to-be as a whole as a territorial Roman-style diocese (Figure 2.3).<sup>76</sup> It is suggested that we are presented here with a contemporary allusion as to the extent of the new Sherborne bishopric which is otherwise nowhere stated. This suggestion is prompted by the instance of an OE *geat* 'gate' name on the border of the Sherborne *mansio* and the apparent instance of *geat* names presented by other Glastonbury-held county/border estates, the most suggestive being the *bi talayate* recorded along the Cranborne/Damerham, Dorset/Hampshire (formerly Wiltshire) boundary of 946—the Glastonbury Damerham estate assessed here not in hides but in *mansiones*.<sup>77</sup> Suffice to say it is not known when Glastonbury acquired these estates; these may have formed part of a scattered British episcopal *parrochia* where (certainly in Ireland) the power of an abbot could

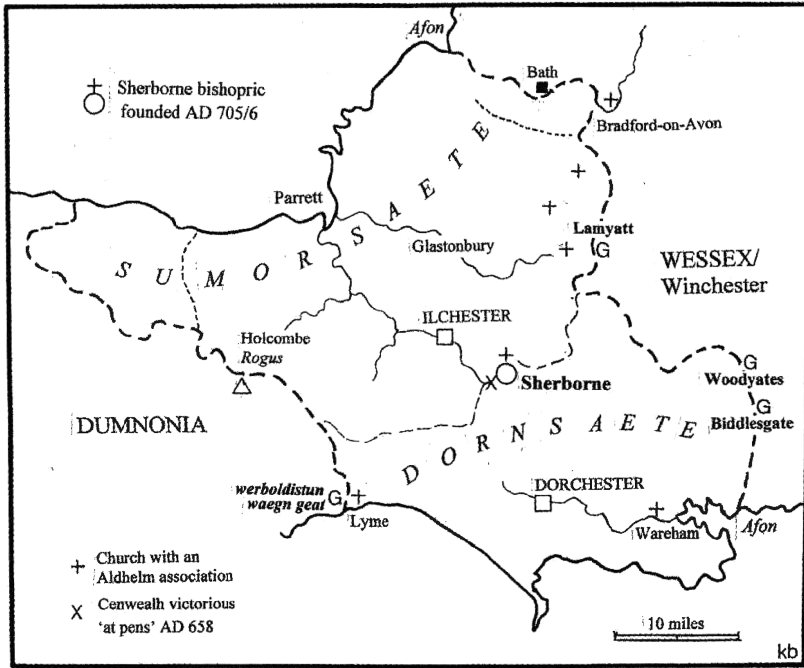


Figure 2.3 Suggested area of the Sherborne bishopric as coincident with a pair of—*saete*-named territories in today's counties of Somerset and Dorset. Aldhelm was described as bishop 'to the west of [Sel]wood' along the Wiltshire border but there is no surviving reference as to just how far west his jurisdiction was extended. The instance of early Glastonbury-held estates (G) along the Dorset and Wiltshire/Hampshire borders suggests that Aldhelm's cryptic reference to Helmgils' 'standing surety' along the newly-established shire boundary with *Dumonia*/Devon may also relate to the making of the borders of the newly-instituted bishopric.

overshadow that of a bishop,<sup>78</sup> and which were to be 'subsumed' into the new Roman territorial-style Sherborne bishopric. It is suggested here that there was a complementary re-institution of the old Roman border *portoria* on formally agreed boundaries. For the eighth-century Carolingian world the most common situation which called for hostages was that to guarantee safe passage—a negotiation to end conflict.<sup>79</sup> Aldhelm himself likens the duty of prayer to the regular payment of the *vectigalia*, 'road tax,' on the path through life.<sup>80</sup>

Mullen has noted the various strategies of adopting 'cover names' in contact situations evidenced in other challenging, multi-lingual contexts.<sup>81</sup> This is presented by that *Eald helm* in the diplomatic 'appointment' of his *Helm gils* on that 'front line' of Germanic Roman Christian relations with the western British Christian world. Such draws attention to the cover

names presented by other members of the first generations of West Saxon rulers, not least is that of Cyneigils, Aldhelm's grandfather.<sup>82</sup> The first to embrace Christianity, he himself presents a 'hostage' name, *cyne gils*, 'kin hostage,' and one which also invites further enquiry, one which points to his relations with Gaul.<sup>83</sup> Founder of the Dorchester-on-Thames bishopric in an old Roman *civitas* capital, his son Cenwealh, 'strong Briton,' set up another bishopric in Winchester, and is given as both victor *aet peonnum*, 'at pens,' and *fundator* of the Sherborne church on the (British Christian) estate *at Lanprobi*, destined to become the seat of the new bishopric (Figure 2.3).

## Conclusions

As noted above the theoretical background underpinning seventh-century literary composition provided great potential for creative, original allegory. Aldhelm's *Carmen rhythmicum* falls well within this *milieu* and a re-reading has brought about a unique 'on-the-ground' insight into his cross-cultural poetic identity through an exploration of the connotations of his *casses obses* which betrays a developed Christian Latin *milieu* for both Saxon and Briton. His reputation as that 'first English man of letters' finds its origins in his self-declared *Germanic* lineage in his abandonment of that debt to his Brittonic inheritance. At least bilingual and fluent in literary Latin, he would have been a canny ambassador. In his *Carmen rhythmicum* he presents a poetic work composed for public recitation offering his high-status colleague as 'hostage surety' in respecting that high-status diplomatic exercise initiated by a formally-composed prose *epistola* addressed to *Geruntius*, king of *Domnonia*, that set the scene for the shiring of both county and bishopric. As noted by Colman, 'aside from exegetically or otherwise scholarly motivated investigation into name and aside from punning just for fun, one major motivation for onomastic etymological introspection is provided by contact between, and emigration from, one culture to another.'<sup>84</sup>

Reflecting on the imagery of the estate presented at Lyme following the institution of an episcopal *mansio* lets us understand that both Glastonbury and Sherborne had been the seat of a British bishop, and that Aldhelm and his 'Helmgils' were the first West Saxon clerics to assume their respective mantles in the name of the Roman church, with the latter 'demoted' in the establishment of a Roman-style territorial bishopric of which he was cryptically placed as hostage guardian. Aldhelm's stated delay in submitting his composition may have enhanced its relevance with regard to the delay in his consecration as bishop.

'History is allegorical,' as Augustine observed. Intimations here of a relationship between these two men presents a 'hostageship' which had implications for both parties; Aldhelm, the 'old helmet,' was not to become Bishop of Sherborne until Helmgils, his Greek *catholice*, 'all embracing,' *anthletice*,



‘prize-fighting,’ Latin *casses* [feminine noun] ‘helmet’ *obses*, [masculine or feminine] ‘hostage’ could no longer challenge his appointment. Helmgils may indeed have had the last laugh.

## Notes

- 1 The author would like put on record her thanks to both Katherine Weikert and to Matthew Bennett for their editorial assistance.
- 2 Kosto, 2–5; 54.
- 3 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 519–23; *Aldhelm Poetic*, 177–9. For translations by Michael Lapidge, David Howlett, Nicholas Brooks and Katherine Barker, see Katherine Barker with Nicholas Brooks, eds. *Aldhelm and Sherborne, Essays to Celebrate the Founding of the Bishopric* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2010), 271–99.
- 4 Vivien Law, *Wisdom, Authority and Grammar in the Seventh Century: Decoding Virgilius Maro Grammaticus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 101.
- 5 Michael Lapidge, ‘The Career of Aldhelm,’ *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007): 68.
- 6 Michael Lapidge, ‘The Career of Archbishop Theodore,’ in *Archbishop Theodore, Commemorative Studies on his Life and Influence*, ed. Michael Lapidge, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 11 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27; Andrew J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 161–66.
- 7 Carmela Virgilio Franklin, ‘Theodore and the *Passio S. Anastasi*,’ in *Theodore*, ed. Lapidge, 191.
- 8 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 492: 11.
- 9 Richard Hodges, *Dark Age Economics: A New Audit*. Duckworth Debates in Archaeology. (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).
- 10 Ben Palmer, ‘The Hinterlands of Three Southern English Emporia: Some Common Themes,’ in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe, Trading and ‘Productive Sites, 650–850*, eds. Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (Macclesfield: Windgather Press, 2003), 48–61; Barker, ‘*Usque Domnoniam: Sherborne, Glastonbury and the Expansion of Wessex*,’ in *Aldhelm*, Barker with Brooks, 55–109.
- 11 Berenike Walburg, ‘Commerce in the Middle East between the Seventh and Ninth Centuries According to the Syriac Law Books’ (Paper presented at an Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity colloquium, Trinity College, Oxford, May 2011); Barker, ‘*Aldhelmus episcopus: The Making and Shiring of the Sherborne Bishopric—Saxon, Briton and the Byzantine*,’ *Dorset Procs* 134 (2013): 113–27; Barker, ‘Aldhelm and the Byzantine World: *Serica, Saba and Saraceni*,’ in *The Anglo-Saxons: the World through their Eyes*, eds. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider. BAR British Series 595 (2014), note 31.
- 12 Kosto, 3.
- 13 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 482: 21; *Aldhelm Prose*, 156; Sam Turner, ‘Coast and Countryside in “Late Antique” Southwest England, c. AD 400–600,’ in *Debating Late Antiquity in Britain AD300–700*, eds. R. Collins and J. Gerrard. BAR British Series 365 (2004), 25–32. Aldhelm’s *Geruntius* is very probably to be identified with the King *Gerent* [*Geraint*], of the *Chronicles* referred to in AD 710 (*Aldhelm Prose*, 142–3 and see below); a case has also been made for his identification with one ‘St Gerent’: Gilbert H. Doble, *The Saints of Cornwall: The Saints of Fal, Pt. 3* (Burnham-on-Sea: Llanerch Press, reprinted 1997), 74–83. See also Kenneth Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain, a Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages 1st to 12th c. AD* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953), 601, note 1.

- 14 Barker, 'The Early Christian Topography of Sherborne,' *Antiquity* 54 (1980): 229–31; see also Barker, 'The Early History of Sherborne,' in *The Early Church in Western Britain and Ireland*, ed. Susan Pearce, BAR British Series 102 (1982): 77–118, and Barker, 'Sherborne in Dorset: An Early Ecclesiastical Settlement and its Estate,' *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 3 (1984): 1–33.
- 15 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 202: 5.
- 16 Christopher B. Krebs, *A Most Dangerous Book: Tacitus' Germania from the Roman Empire to the Third Reich* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), 29–55.
- 17 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 78: 5.
- 18 *Aldhelm Poetic*; *Aldhelm Prose*.
- 19 Thomas Habinek, *The World of Roman Song, from Ritualized Speech to Social Order* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 2. See also J.E. Caerwyn Williams, 'The Celtic Bard,' in *A Celtic Florilegium studies in memory of Brendan O Hehir*, eds. Kathryn Klar, Caerwyn, Eve E. Sweetster, and Claire Thomas (Lawrence, MA: Celtic Studies Publications, 1996), 221–2.
- 20 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 468: 388–92; Barker, 'The *Carmen Rhythmicum*, Aldhelm, Poet and Composer of *Carmina*,' in Barker with Brooks, *Aldhelm*, 240–43.
- 21 R.E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1965), 505.
- 22 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 485: 21–2; Barker, 'Poet,' 254–56.
- 23 Duncan Probert, 'New Light on Aldhelm's Letter to King Gerent of Dumnonia,' in *Aldhelm*, Barker with Brooks, 110–28.
- 24 Roberta Frank, 'The Search for the Anglo-Saxon Oral Poet,' in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. Donald Scragg (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 138.
- 25 More usually *Dumnonia*, Aldhelm's use of *Domnonia* betokens that forthcoming 'Day of Judgement' in the making of relations between Briton and West Saxon. Aldhelm's company had travelled by way of *caentem Cornubiam* 'shorn Cornwall,' which we may understand here was already 'shorn of its horns,' *cornu*: Barker, 'Usque *Domnoniam*: The Setting of Aldhelm's *Carmen Rhythmicum*,' in Barker with Brooks, *Aldhelm*, 23–4.
- 26 Probert, 'Letter,' suggests the *epistola* Aldhelm addressed to Gerent was to inaugurate a period of diplomatic activity between Briton and Saxon. The dating of this *epistola* is not established but worthy of consideration here is that it was this which prompted the high-status envoy to *Cornubia* and *Domnonia*. Aldhelm states that he composed this *epistola* following a *concilio episcoporum* 'episcopal council' (*Aldhelmi Opera*, 480: 4). Rosier, *Prose Works*, 141, suggests this was the Council of Hertford held in 672; that 'traditional identification with the Council of 'Hatfeld' of 679 'is conjecture'; Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c.650-c.850*, Studies in the Early History of Britain (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), 319–320. 'Hatfield' a 'reading' of OE *Hæthfeld* draws attention to that *Hethfelde* [*Streete*] in the Sherborne out-hundred accessible from the Dorchester/Ilchester Roman road. Placing this episcopal council further west than has hitherto been considered is to provide a plausible context for the composition of a diplomatic *epistola* to *Dumnonia* from that territory which was to see the making of the West Saxon bishopric: Barker, 'Shiring,' note 5, and 'Byzantine World' note 25; see also Barker, 'An Elizabethan Map of North-West Dorset: Sherborne, Yetminster and Surrounding Manors,' in *Maps and History in South-West England*, eds. Katherine Barker and Roger Kain (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1991), Fig 2.5, 36, 46.
- 27 *Ymnista carmen cecini*; note Aldhelm is using a word of Greek origin, 'ymnus.'
- 28 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 524–28; *Aldhelm Poetic*, 177–79; for full references see Barker, 'Setting,' 15–19.



- 29 Andy Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 28–9.
- 30 A possible candidate for the building described by Aldhelm in which he and his company were worshipping that fateful morning when the roof, with its *tigilli* ‘tiles’ was ripped off by the force of the wind between ‘Aldhelm’ and ‘Uplyme’ is the Holcombe Roman villa site in Uplyme; see Malcolm Todd, ‘Baths or Baptisteries? Holcombe, Lufton and their Analogues,’ *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 24:3 (2005): 307–11; Barker, ‘Shiring,’ note 7, and see here Fig. 1
- 31 ‘Reader, universal helmet and competitive hostage, your repeated reminders determinedly demand [that] I the *hymnista*, table [compose] this *carmen* and fulfil the project I undertook so long ago.’ *Aldhelmi Opera*, 524: 1–7, trans. Barker in Barker with Brooks, *Aldhelm*, 284.
- 32 *Aldhelm Poetic*, note 1; 262. See Barker ‘Setting,’ 27–30.
- 33 Lapidge, ‘Career Aldhelm,’ 17, 20.
- 34 Barker, ‘Setting,’ 27–9.
- 35 Fran Colman, *The Grammar of Old English Names: The Linguistics and Culture of the Old English Onomasticon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 101–50.
- 36 Sarah Foot, ‘Glastonbury’s Early Abbots,’ in *The Archaeology and History of Glastonbury Abbey; Essays in Honour of the Ninetieth Birthday of C.A. Raleigh Radford*, ed. Lesley Abrams and James P. Carley (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1991), 169.
- 37 ASC 676.
- 38 Foot, ‘Abbots,’ 168.
- 39 William of Malmesbury, *Early History of Glastonbury Abbey*, trans. John Scott (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1981), 91.
- 40 John of Glastonbury, *Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. James P. Carley, trans. David Townsend (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), XLVII, 92–3.
- 41 Law, *Wisdom*, 14.
- 42 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 524: 8–10, Barker, ‘Setting,’ 24.
- 43 S 263. Katherine Barker, ‘*Salis ad ripam maris aet Lim*, Of Salt and the Coast at Lyme,’ *Dorset Procs* 127, (2005), 43–51.
- 44 H.S.A. Fox, ‘The Boundary of Uplyme,’ *The Devonshire Association Report and Transactions* 102 (1970): 35–48; Della Hooke, *Pre-Conquest Charter-Bounds of Devon and Cornwall* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), 127–34.
- 45 Barker, ‘Setting,’ 26, Fig 1.1. In the Sherborne Benedictine charter of 998 this estate is referred to as ‘one *mansa*’ sited ‘next to/up against the sea shore which is called at Lim’, *mansam unam iuxta ripam maris qui dicitur aet Lim*; Barker, ‘The Sherborne Estate at Lyme,’ in *St Wulfsige and Sherborne, Essays to Celebrate the Millennium of the Benedictine Abbey, 998–1998*, ed. Barker, David Hinton and Alan Hunt (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005).
- 46 *Aldhelm Poetic*, 171.
- 47 Barker, ‘Setting,’ 22–7.
- 48 Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972), 131–2. Barker, ‘Shiring,’ 115.
- 49 ‘*ac ecclesiasticae traditionis quadriformis . . . historiam, allegoriam, tropologiam, anagogen . . .*’ *Aldhelmi Opera*, 232: 19–20; *Aldhelm Prose*, 62, Barker, ‘Setting,’ 18–19.
- 50 Philip Rollinson, *Classical Theories of Allegory and Christian Culture* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1981), 95.
- 51 Rollinson, *Classical*, 74, 84.
- 52 Rollinson, *Classical*, 46.
- 53 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 527: 146–7, 151; Barker, ‘Shiring,’ 31–6.
- 54 Foot, ‘Abbots,’ 169; Malmesbury, *Glastonbury*, 91.
- 55 Colman, 103, 105, 120.

- 56 David Howlett demonstrates Aldhelm's skill in the trans-gendering of Latin words, and 'the devastating response' of one of his correspondents: 'Early Insular Poetry,' *Peritia* 17:19 (2004): 61–91.
- 57 Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), 1152. A condemnation by Aldhelm of homosexuality is presented in his re-working of Jerome's *Life of St Malchus* relating how, threatened by a sword astride a plough, Malchus was martyred rather than yield to an attack from the rear by a Saracen slave-master. See Barker, 'Byzantine World,' 119–24; see also note 19.
- 58 Lewis and Short, *Latin Dictionary*, 815. Juvenal, 'Satire 1,' in *Juvenal and Persius*, ed. and trans. Susanna Morton Braund (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 134–5.
- 59 An author studied by Aldhelm on Iona: Lapidge, 'Career Aldhelm,' 29–30.
- 60 C.A. Faraone, 'Clay Hardens and Wax Melts: Magical Role-Reversal in Vergil's Eighth Eclogue,' *Classical Philology* 84 (Oct 1989): 294–300.
- 61 Jill Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 192–3.
- 62 Philip Rahtz, 'Pagan and Christian by Severn Sea,' in *Archaeology*, eds. Abrams and Carley.
- 63 Ken R. Dark, *Britain and the End of the Roman Empire* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), 63.
- 64 Ian Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1994), 215.
- 65 Joaquin Martinez Pizarro, 'The King Says No: On the Logic of Type-scenes in Late Antique and Early Medieval Narrative,' in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe*, eds. J.R. Davis and M. McCormick (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008): 181–192.
- 66 Laura Carlson, 'Negotiating the Borderlands: The Frankish-Iberian Relations in the Wake of 711' (Paper presented at an Oxford Centre for Late Antiquity colloquium, Archaeological Institute, Oxford, June 2011).
- 67 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 476: 8; *Aldhelm Prose*, 152; Lapidge, 'Career Theodore,' 17; Martin Brett, 'Theodore and the Latin Canon Law,' in *Theodore*, ed. Lapidge.
- 68 Daibhi O'Croinin, *Early Medieval Ireland 400–1200* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1995), 134–5; Lapidge, 'Career Aldhelm,' G.T. Dempsey, 'Aldhelm of Malmesbury and the Irish,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 99:1 (1999).
- 69 Kosto, 8, 20.
- 70 Guy Bois, *The Transformation of the Year 1000: The Village of Lournand from Antiquity to Feudalism*, trans. Jean Birrell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 36–7.
- 71 Hodges, *Economics*, 67–90. Bede's Jarrow was served by *Portus Ecgfridi* on the Tyne and of note here is Aldhelm's dedication of his *de Virginitate* understood as to the sisterhood of a community in Barking—one located on a tidal creek on the Thames; *Prose Works*, 51–8 and *Poetic Works*, 97–101. Aldhelm's *Enigmata* on the *farus editissima* 'lofty lighthouse' draws attention to an important (and complementary) role played by the newly-instituted Roman church relating to the coast watch, see Barker, 'St Aldhelm and the Chapel at Worth Matravers,' *Dorset Procs* 126 (2005). At the height of the *Carmen* storm Aldhelm alludes to the collapse of a coastal stone structure; Barker, 'Shiring,' 122, Fig 2. A later 'look out' may be echoed in the *Sigilmere* of the AD 938 charter: see Fig 1.
- 72 Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 237–8.
- 73 Mark W. Graham, *News and Frontier Consciousness in the Later Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 117. Andrew Small notes

the importance of hostageship in the Byzantine world. The side that gave the hostage would guarantee safe passage ‘especially along frontiers’ between that ‘patchwork of ethnic groups coming together;’ a practice which was ‘to exercise extensive power over their neighbours.’ The Byzantine principle was that of *isopoliteia* ‘reciprocal rights:’ ‘The History of Hostage Exchange’ (paper given at the Oxford University Byzantine Society’s XVII International Graduate Conference, February 2015).

- 74 Barker, ‘The Dorset County Boundary Survey: A First Report,’ *Dorset Procs* 128 (2008): 137–138; Barker, ‘Setting,’ 53: Plates 1.1a and 1.1b.
- 75 Peter Heather, ‘*Foedera* and *Foederati* in the Fourth Century,’ in *Kingdoms of the Empire: The Integration of the Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Walter Pohl (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 66.
- 76 Barker, ‘Shiring,’ It was laid down ‘That no bishop intrude into the diocese of another bishop, but that he should be content with the government of the people committed to his charge’: Brett, ‘Theodore,’ in Lapidge, *Theodore*.
- 77 Barker, ‘The Dorset county boundary at Biddlesgate between the parishes of Cranborne (Dorset) and Damerham (Hampshire from 1885, formerly Wiltshire),’ *Dorset Procs*, 135 (2014). See also Barker. ‘Shiring,’ 120–1. *Bi talayate* may present ‘by way of the’ OE *toel*, ‘slope’ gate; local dialect may be invoked in a reading of this as ‘by way of the tollgate.’
- 78 T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 245.
- 79 Kosto, 58–60.
- 80 *Aldhelmi Opera*, 71; J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, ‘Cities, Taxes and the Accommodation of the Barbarians: The Theories of Durlat and Goffart,’ in *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity*, ed. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz. Variorum Collected Studies Series CS846 Aldershot: Ashgate 2006), 150.
- 81 Alex Mullen, ‘Introduction: Multiple Languages, Multiple Identities,’ in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen and Patrick James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 8.
- 82 Cenwealh’s brother Centwine was Aldhelm’s father (see Lapidge, ‘Career Aldhelm,’ 20) whom Aldhelm tells us founded many *basilicas* on *ruris novellis*; ‘churches’ ‘church/halls’ on ‘new’ ‘newly-acquired’ ‘country estates;’ Sherborne and Lyme probably number among these. *Aldhelmi Opera*, 3:6; 14.
- 83 James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986), 53, 66, 76.
- 84 Colman, *Grammar*, 120–1.

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### 3 Perceiving and Personifying Status and Submission in Pre-Viking England

#### Some Observations on a Few Early Hostages

*Ryan Lavelle*

Recent studies on the use of hostages in the Middle Ages, including the papers published elsewhere in this volume, show a range of issues to be addressed when we try to understand why one or more human beings might be handed over to others: the nature of the political relationships entailed in the giving or taking of hostages, including those across perceived ethnic boundaries; the value of hostages as a symbolic currency, including in cases where the gender of the hostages (or indeed that of their recipient) made a difference; the norms and expectations of behaviour, including how hostages were treated—or at least how they might expect to be treated—including whether an explicit or implicit threat is of major significance or just a passing detail.<sup>1</sup> I hope to show in the following discussion that these are all issues which are relevant to the study of the Anglo-Saxon policies prior to the Viking *adventus* of the ninth century.

In common with many of my fellow contributors' approaches, this paper begins with Adam Kosto's recent monograph on medieval hostageship. Covering the 'medieval millennium,' Kosto displays an understandable interest in change across time; he notes a difference in practice from modern hostageship, not least in the fact that although the modern hostage shares some similarities in theory, the medieval hostage differs somewhat markedly, not least because of the apparent liberty with which they were given by comparison with modern hostages. Kosto observes changes in practice through the Middle Ages, too. Commenting on the increase in the use of female hostages in from around the eleventh century, Kosto notes a shift out of a 'framework of family and alliance' into something that 'was at once more de-individualized, commercialized, and bureaucratic.'<sup>2</sup> This essay is not concerned with commerce and bureaucracy. Kosto's approach is useful, however, as it is with that 'framework of family and alliance' that the *few* pre-Viking Age hostages on which the essay focuses come in.

My own work on later Anglo-Saxon hostages, published around a decade ago, broadly addressed the ninth to the eleventh centuries, concentrating on the practical elements of the personified guarantee.<sup>3</sup> Though finding the arguments of Kosto, as well as those of Paul Kershaw,<sup>4</sup> to be persuasive

in making a case for the underlying sense of authority and status in early medieval hostage-taking and in the bestowing of hostages, I tended toward an interpretation of an underlying threat of violence. There is perhaps an eminent practicality in the use of hostages in an Anglo-Saxon political scene on which the Viking *adventus* had made a lasting impact, a society where groups holding different expectations needed to make agreements.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, justifying the upper time limit of his 2003 article on Carolingian hostages, Kosto notes a similar phenomenon in Francia, with Frankish hostage 'importers' becoming hostage 'exporters' (to Vikings) after 840.<sup>6</sup>

Such an interpretation need not mean that the hostage should be seen as having suddenly become a tool of brutal reality because of the circumstances of the Viking Age; the status of hostages gave them inherent value. In what follows, though, I wish to make a case for the inherent status of hostages in an earlier political society which, in many ways, was not too dissimilar from that laid out in the *Críth Gablach* ('Branched Purchase') lawcode of Ireland, dating from around the turn of the eighth century, by which the status of rulers could be determined by the hostages who they held and indeed where they kept them.<sup>7</sup> In some ways my discussion here supplements my recent work on chapter 70.1 of the lawcode of Ine of Wessex, in which I make a case for the receipt of renders—enumerated in a long and apparently rather arbitrary list—being associated with tributary (i.e., British) subjects.<sup>8</sup> As Thomas Charles-Edwards, amongst others, has noted, such tributary renders were part of the expectations of Insular kingship.<sup>9</sup> It is appropriate to consider that if Anglo-Saxon kings were like other Insular rulers in operating on a model of the receipt of render from subject kings, the receipt of hostages played a part in the milieu of this kingship. The Insular evidence outside England is rich with examples, such as the Welsh *Historia Brittonum*'s portrayal of Roman emperors as receivers of hostages (*obsides*) and tributes (*censum*, lit. 'tax') from the Britons.<sup>10</sup> Basing a reading of Welsh kingship on Irish clientship, Charles-Edwards notes the demand of 'sureties, *meichiau*, to guarantee the payment of [an overlord's] tribute, *mechteyrnged*.'<sup>11</sup> The other Welsh term for a personal surety is *gwystl* and it may be demonstrative of the sophistication of such systems of clientship that more than one word exists to denote it. Similarly, in pre-ninth-century Irish legal practice, the *aitire*, 'between-man,' was distinguished from a *gíall*, a party more clearly identifiable as a hostage, in that what mattered from a legal perspective was the *potential* hostageship of the *aitire*, which could be claimed for ten days by a *muire/muiredach* (the Irish equivalent of the Welsh *mechteyrn*?) in cases of non-payment of compensation following a dispute.<sup>12</sup> While Anglo-Saxon sources may not reveal such customary links between hostage-payment mechanisms and tribute or legal compensation payments,<sup>13</sup> it is still appropriate to start from the position that, just as elsewhere in the Insular world, the hostages reported in early and middle Anglo-Saxon sources are linked in some way to the status of rulers. The hostages can thus reveal something of that royal status.



The structure of this paper is empirically determined by the few examples of hostages for whom evidence survives from early and middle Anglo-Saxon England. Taking each of these examples in turn, the political, social and cultural context of the presentation of each of the hostages (or sets of hostages) will be addressed, in order to consider the significance of their status. Thereafter, the implications of that status are explored in terms of the possible evidence for hostageship in the early medieval landscape. However, a discussion of the early medieval terminology is first appropriate.

As Thomas Charles-Edwards has pointed out, the fact that the term for base clientship in Irish law, *gíallnae*, was the same as that for hostageship emphasises the status of a king's relationship to his subject kings.<sup>14</sup> There is etymological similarity of the OE term for hostage, *gīsl*, to the Irish *gíall* and the Welsh *gwystl*, terms which all included broader senses of the surety/pledge; the same Latin term, *obses*, is used by Insular Latin writers as by other European Latin sources, so some common ground in the range of conditions of usage can reasonably be expected.<sup>15</sup> Although obviously common terminology cannot mean absolute comparability, the manner in which hostages appear, with some regularity, in circumstances in which peace was made or submission sought in Anglo-Saxon England suggests that the potential effectiveness of hostages was understood by Anglo-Saxons as much as by their Celtic and Frankish contemporaries. This made hostages a tool which could operate across ethnic boundaries but perhaps in the process of investigation, something may yet be revealed of the Insular roots of Anglo-Saxon kingship.

The available corpus of examples is not large. Four pre-ninth century references to hostageship are identified through the vernacular word *gīsl* or the Latin *obses*: (i) A letter from Bishop Wealdhere of London to Archbishop Berhtwold of Canterbury;<sup>16</sup> (ii) A hostage held by Queen Cynewise of the Mercians in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*;<sup>17</sup> (iii) The 'Titus' or 'Jerusalem' scene on the Franks Casket;<sup>18</sup> and (iv) The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s 757 entry detailing the fight between Cyneheard and Cynewulf.<sup>19</sup> A further set of evidence is considered at the end of this paper, (v) the evidence for hostageship recorded in place-names and occasional charter bounds, which might have an early- to mid-Saxon context.

Although examples i–iv vary in terms of both the details of the hostage situation and in terms of the geographical context, with two related to Southumbria and two to Northumbria, some initial points can be drawn from them. For one matter, they demonstrate that as in Ireland and Wales, hostageship was (logically) used in interactions between those who shared the same cultural values and was not only a tool whose utility lay in dealing with outside groups. Secondly, when considered collectively, they help us to understand the association of hostages with the status of their holder.

### Bishop Wealdhere's Letter

The earliest known reference to hostageship in the Anglo-Saxon period is probably less a reference to a real 'hostage situation' than an indication that

such circumstances existed and that the author was familiar enough with them to allude to them. The reference is in a Latin letter of 704 or 705 from Bishop Wealdhere of London to Berhtwald, Archbishop of Canterbury, stating the bishop's position as a temporal arbitrator for the East Saxons and West Saxons. The bishop's words (probably his own autographed words, as Pierre Chaplais observed) are thus:

I can by no means reconcile them, and become, as it were [*quasi*], a hostage of peace [*obses pacis*], unless a very great amount of intercourse takes place between us, and this I will not and dare not do unless you wish it and give us permission.<sup>20</sup>

The letter shows, as Paul Kershaw has recently noted, a wish to arbitrate, and recognition of the need that negotiation should take place prior to formal peace agreements.<sup>21</sup> There is precedent here: Berhtwald's immediate predecessor, Archbishop Theodore, had made peace between the Mercians and Northumbrians in 679 under circumstances suggestive of feud,<sup>22</sup> so the notion of a bishop standing as a peacemaker could hardly have been beyond the interests of Archbishop Berhtwald. However, Wealdhere was at odds with his archbishop's prohibition of communion with the West Saxons, who had not yet agreed with an archiepiscopal decree on the ordination of bishops.<sup>23</sup>

The use of *quasi* may suggest that here *obses* was figurative, consciously echoing Late Antique texts, perhaps St Jerome's fourth-century *Life* of Paul of Thebes, the first hermit (a figure not unknown in pre-Viking England),<sup>24</sup> a text which treats fruit from palm trees offered by a curious desert creature as 'quasi pacis obsides.'<sup>25</sup> Although an object here is a *pledge* of peace,<sup>26</sup> the notion of *obses* as a person is not lost. Wealdhere was evidently aware of this metaphor and probably is not averse to the irony of relating earthly rulers to creatures of the desert—perhaps a little wink to his archbishop? Wealdhere's celebrated contemporary, Abbot Aldhelm of Malmesbury (a figure discussed elsewhere in this volume by Katherine Barker), also made literary allusions to Jerome's *Life* of Paul of Thebes,<sup>27</sup> and it may not be coincidental that Chaplais comments on the similarities between Wealdhere's accentual rhythm and that of Aldhelm. While Chaplais notes that Wealdhere's Latin 'is not faultless,' his 'vocabulary is none the worse for being more sober than that of his contemporary Aldhelm.'<sup>28</sup> Such allusions as that to the *obses pacis* could hardly have been without value in the meta-textual games which evidently developed in early Christian correspondence in England. A further layer of meaning may be apparent in the allusion if Wealdhere's name was intended as an OE rendering of the Continental *Waltharius*, a legendary hostage in the court of Attila in the fifth century and the subject of European poems of the early Middle Ages, including in a c.1000 manuscript fragment of OE.<sup>29</sup> Given Alcuin's slightly later rebuking of those in the church who paid more attention to heroic tales than those of Christ, if Wealdhere alluded to a heroic namesake whose reputation

circulated around Europe, it would not have been out of place in the early eighth-century episcopal office.

We need not expect the two possible allusions, one pious, and the other seemingly secular, to have been mutually exclusive. Neither should the fact that they are allusions lead to a minimalist reading of hostageship in this period, attributing an understanding of hostageship to the world of Late Antiquity alone, thus leading to a conclusion the state of hostageship which Wealdhere refers to may not be taken as evidence for its existence in early eighth-century England. Given that we know that hostages were used at other points in the pre-Viking period, a specific vernacular reference to 'peace hostages,' *friðgislas*, albeit outside our period, in the tenth-century (or possibly eleventh-century) *Ordinance of the Dunsæte*, again in a reference to cross-border communication,<sup>30</sup> suggests that the allusion to Late Antiquity was incidental to the circumstances that Wealdhere evoked rather than central to the message that he evidently intended to convey. Notwithstanding whether he slipped in a reference to heroic poetry, an eighth-century bishop of London may have been expected to throw out Latin phrases from Late Antique texts to supplement the more common Biblical allusions, but Wealdhere may just as easily have been thinking in the vernacular, of a *friðgisl*, when he composed that part of his letter to his superior.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the case, even if Wealdhere did not envisage himself taking the formal role of a hostage, the 'peace hostage' was at least a familiar enough motif for Wealdhere to invoke in communication with his archbishop.

### A Northumbrian as Hostage in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*

The reasonable certainty with which we can talk of Wealdhere's familiarity with the use of hostages is provided by the fact that although the second Anglo-Saxon reference to hostages dates from 731 and is thus later than Wealdhere's letter, it refers to the use of hostages in political circumstances in the mid-seventh century. In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, Bede refers to Ecgrith, son of King Oswiu of Northumbria, as a hostage (*obses*) in the court of the Mercian queen, Cynewise, in 655, at the time of the Battle of the *Winwæd*.<sup>32</sup> As well as helping to show the odds stacked against Oswiu, Ecgrith's hostageship is indicative of the Mercian king Penda's political superiority and of the Mercian queen's independent (or at least quasi-independent) political position, perhaps even as the party who had received Ecgrith as the hostage in the first place.<sup>33</sup> Bede does not give any indication that the Northumbrians held any hostages given by Penda, although of course if a state of peace had existed prior to Penda's aggression, an exchange of hostages is a plausible scenario which might help to explain why Bede gives no hint that Ecgrith had been harmed as a result of his father's actions.

However, any practicality of a lack of *mutual* harm as a result of a guarantee backed up by hostages does not appear to have been the main issue related to the interaction, and it is probably not what piqued Bede's interest

in his account of the affair. Oswiu's offer of tribute to Penda in the face of Penda's bellicosity would have made him into a subordinate of the pagan ruler and the subsequent resistance against Penda and his thirty *duces* by Oswiu is thus shown by Bede in the context of overlordship, perhaps demonstrating that Oswiu's defiance against the pagan king was only possible through Christ's support.<sup>34</sup> Bede shows that a pact made with God by Oswiu allowed him to avoid submission to Penda, who was, according to Bede, subjecting Oswiu to 'savage and intolerable attacks' ('acerbas atque intolerabiles . . . inruptiones') and who refused any tribute offered by Oswiu. The gift—the *offering*—of his daughter to a nunnery is presented as operating in the same political norms as a personified gift given in the form of a hostage. The pagan's overlordship is thus replaced by that of God.<sup>35</sup> The figure of the hostage in Bede's narrative thus serves to remind his readers, whose interests probably lay in the Northumbrian court,<sup>36</sup> of the expectations of overlordship, perhaps also reminding them—however unpleasant the task may have been for Bede—of their kingdom's earlier subjection to a pagan king.

Considering the fact that Bede gives no indication that Ecgrith suffered any retribution (and indeed remained alive to take the Northumbrian throne in 670), it is tempting to suggest that hostages were too important as part of a political ritual for such crucial assets as a be-hostaged Ecgrith held by Penda to be squandered by mutilation or execution, but we should not necessarily presume *physical* violence to have been part of the game. In Ireland, as Bart Jaski noted, a party given as surety for tribute payment may lose his social status, his honour price, rather than his life. This was presumably as much a social death as actual execution, and if there is a parallel to be drawn with Oswiu (who had, after all, spent part of his early career in exile in Ireland and/or Scotland),<sup>37</sup> it may be a reason why Bede wished to emphasise Penda's refusal of tribute in his account, which would have meant that Ecgrith retained his social capital in spite of his father's apparent reneging on the agreement which had led to his son's hostageship.

Moreover, the context and sheer practicality of the situation should be noted, which could also explain Ecgrith's survival: Penda may simply have perished in battle before he could give orders for harm to be done to any hostages.<sup>38</sup> In any case, the court of the queen and that of her husband may have been at such a distance from each other that an order of harm to Ecgrith could not have been implemented. Perhaps most importantly (and a little less speculatively), given that Oswiu's nephew, Æthelwald, son of Oswiu's brother Oswald, was fighting on Penda's side, the political situation had inherent complications which may have determined the survival of Ecgrith. Penda's daughter, Cyneburh, was married to Oswiu's other son and co-ruler, Ealhfrith, prior to the battle,<sup>39</sup> a matter which presumably ensured a complex set of family relations. This female dimension to the network of political relationships may shed light, albeit dimly, on why Ecgrith had been sent to the queen's court rather than that of the king—or indeed, given the early eighth-century significance of questions of succession to Ecgrith,

why it mattered to record where Ecgrith had been at this crucial time in the mid seventh century.<sup>40</sup>

### The Franks Casket

The portrayal of the sack of Jerusalem on the eighth-century Franks Casket usefully indicates another northern perception of hostages. On this occasion it is a representation of Antiquity.<sup>41</sup> A group of characters exiting the bottom-right panel of the ‘Titus’ scene on the casket’s rear are in close proximity to the runic inscription *GISL* (‘hostage’—the use of the singular noun may or may not be significant), presenting us with the earliest vernacular reference to hostageship. Although a number of Late Antique sources could have provided an eighth-century Northumbrian audience with an account of Roman triumph in the portrayal of the sack of Jerusalem upon the Franks Casket, the hostages seem to be an interpretation of the high status captives led off for the Emperor’s triumph in Rome and to the circus arena recorded by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus.<sup>42</sup> However, as Carol Neuman de Vegvar has observed, in a short paper published in *Old English Newsletter* (one of the first publications to specifically focus on Anglo-Saxon hostages), there are no hostages in Josephus’s original account of the rebellion’s suppression, so the Roman triumph depicted on the Casket was probably perceived in the manner of a Northumbrian ruler asserting overlordship over a subject people.<sup>43</sup> Enslavement, as Matthew Strickland argued, was the fate of the lower classes of society in pre-Conquest warfare, whereas high status warriors faced death—at least in terms of literary expectations—rather than enslavement.<sup>44</sup>

The crux of Neuman de Vegvar’s short discussion of the ‘Titus’ scene was her argument that women were amongst the captives portrayed on the Casket.<sup>45</sup> Although when first researching Anglo-Saxon hostages some twenty years ago, my reading of the ambiguity of the image and the masculinity of other hostages in an Anglo-Saxon context made me rather sceptical of her claim of female hostageship on the Casket,<sup>46</sup> I now appreciate where the identification stemmed from. There is clear positioning of a brooch in a central position on the clothing of the person depicted stage left, suggesting that she was female (see Figure 3.1);<sup>47</sup> three of the group, at stage right, all wearing brooches in a right-hand position, are male; the gender of the remaining four is unclear.<sup>48</sup> So far, the single female would tie in with the use of the singular noun *GISL* on the casket’s inscription, at the bottom right. But there are other indications of the gendering of the ‘Titus’ scene which suggest that the identifiably female figures of the scene are not hostages but one or more others may be, and they fit squarely in a milieu of *male* hostageship as an indication of conquest and subordination. It is striking that two parties are identifiably different. One is what Leslie Webster calls a ‘muffled’ figure, whose face is obscured by a horizontal bar, who Webster identifies with the hostage of the runic inscription.<sup>49</sup> The bar might represent something akin



Figure 3.1 The depiction of the sack of Jerusalem by the Roman commander Titus on the Franks Casket (or Auzon Casket). The runic descriptions at bottom left and right read DÖM ('judgement') and GISL ('hostage') respectively. (Image copyright ©The British Museum.)

to a slave collar and in that sense might parallel the captivity of a certain class of hostages in contemporary Ireland.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, the image is a little too ambiguous, as indeed is the figure's gender. Another relevant party is a group of three who are unlikely to be guards, as they carry what look like walking sticks rather than weapons, but they are still well-dressed, and they are nearest to the inscription *GISL*. It could be said, as Neuman De Vegvar argued, that the women in the panel are linked with this group, representing the peace-weaver figures going into enforced marriage, but they may not, *strictu sensu*, be people considered as hostages.

In this context, Adam Kosto's interpretation or negative reading of pre-eleventh-century female hostageship noted at the start of this paper holds some weight: such a presentation of women in a political context was not hostageship *per se*. It is still entirely logical for an Anglo-Saxon audience to include women in this context, but there is one further detail that would probably explain why women are significant for this interpretation, which does not require us to consider them as hostages. In Josephus' account, Titus, having killed the feeble and infirm, drew together the rest, who were 'in the prime of life and serviceable' in the 'Court of the Women' in the Temple, a place beyond which only men were permitted to go.<sup>51</sup> While Josephus does not specify whether these captives were male or female, it is a fair bet that the group was *interpreted* as including both. It does not seem unlikely



that the eighth-century Northumbrian interpreter of the events, depicting women on the Franks Casket, knew the strictures of first-century Jewish conduct at the Temple, but my reading of the Casket does not depend on this. It seems likely that the indirect reference to women in the ‘Court of the Women’ in the original text (or at least the artist’s—presumably Latin—intermediary) prompted the depiction of women on the Casket.

This specific gendering may also have stemmed from a reading of Josephus’ original account, in which Titus’s lieutenant

selected the tallest and most handsome of the youths and reserved them for the triumph; of the rest, those over seventeen years of age he sent in chains to the works in Egypt, while multitudes were presented by Titus to the various provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres by the sword or by wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold.<sup>52</sup>

Josephus is not exactly uncategorical but here he has neither hostages *nor* women in his account. It is the (male) youths sent to the triumph that appear as the most important people. In the Casket’s Anglo-Saxon interpretation of the Capture of Jerusalem, the hostages are not portrayed as being sent to a triumph. For an audience in eighth-century Northumbria the details of a Roman triumph presumably needed to be portrayed in a more comprehensible context. This did not mean that the Roman triumph was entirely alien but the receipt of hostages from a subject people meant something real, tangible even, if these were the personified representations of submission in such a context.<sup>53</sup> Those others who were sent to the circuses or simply enslaved evidently did not need to be portrayed by the artist of the Casket but high-status men and women, with the men as hostages, and the women to be married off against their will in a forced fashion,<sup>54</sup> fit entirely logically in an Anglo-Saxon context. Both groups of people help to convey a notion of a captured city, a place under the control of a new overlord, a notion that Anglo-Saxon elites would understand in a temporal context, which would make its understanding in a theological context that much easier.

The enigmatic runic inscriptions, for which the Franks Casket is justly famous, must be noted here. Although inscriptions, including Latin characters, surround the scene depicting the sack of Jerusalem, a second runic word precedes *GISL* in the hostages scene, *DŌM*, ‘judgement,’ an inscription of equal length to *GISL*, in a position mirroring almost exactly the bottom-right position of *GISL*. It has been suggested that the two inscriptions could be taken together, with ‘Domgisl’ used here as a reference to a Frankish personal name,<sup>55</sup> and indeed, given the hostageship puns noted elsewhere in this paper and by Katherine Barker above, this is not impossible. If it is a compound word, *dōmgisl*, ‘judgement hostage’ is more likely to mirror the later attested *friðgisl*, ‘peace hostage’ or *foregisl*, ‘?preliminary hostage’ compounds.<sup>56</sup> Nonetheless, the context of the ‘judgement’ and the position of Israel after AD 70 suggests that *gīsl* here may have been a noun

used to indicate a concept, 'hostagehood,' rather than a specific hostage or hostages as God's judgement on the Jews of Jerusalem was part of the narrative of the Christian reading of Titus's sack of the city. Thus, notwithstanding whether the runic *gisl* was an abbreviation of rare OE terms to indicate hostageship, *gīslhād* or *gīslþu*,<sup>57</sup> the hostageship of the Jews, perhaps as guarantors for the Christian redemption of those who would see themselves as the heirs of the covenant with God,<sup>58</sup> may have been personified by one or more of the figures on the Casket.

### The Cynewulf-Cyneheard Episode in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*

Our fourth example is in another account of a loss of political power, this time more contemporary (though not necessarily entirely so) with pre-Viking kingship. Reference is made to a hostage in the long *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 757, which details the twenty-nine-year reign of the West Saxon King Cynewulf.<sup>59</sup> Although recorded in the ninth century for reasons associated with the dynastic authority of King Alfred's family, the entry may stem from oral poetic tradition.<sup>60</sup> A British hostage is portrayed as part of the 'small following' (*lytle werode*) which went with Cynewulf to the *byrig* of *Meretun*, where the king was visiting his mistress:

Then by the woman's outcry, the king's thegns became aware of the disturbance and ran to the spot, each as he got ready and as quickly as possible. And the *aetheling* [i.e., Cyneheard] made an offer to each of money and life; and not one of them would accept it. But they continued to fight until they all lay dead except for one British hostage, and he was severely wounded [*swiþe gewundad*].

The motif of the British hostage, with wounds which imply he had fought on behalf of Cynewulf, may have been interpreted by the ninth-century audience of the *Chronicle* as personifying the fact that Cynewulf had 'often fought great battles against the Britons' ('oft miclum gefeohtum feaht uuiþ Bretwalum').<sup>61</sup> Presumably a hostage who went as far as to fight for his guardian—presumably following, as Peter S. Baker notes, a narrative formula<sup>62</sup>—represented victories in such battles and, as a survivor in circumstances where the survival of anyone *but* the hostage would have been shameful for that survivor (at least in terms of literary expectations, perhaps like the hostage in the *Battle of Maldon*),<sup>63</sup> the British hostage may have served as a witness to the account, giving it a sense of veracity, however contrived that sense of veracity may have been in reality.

There may also have been some symmetry seen between the wounded hostage in King Cynewulf's retinue and the unnamed man in the *aetheling* Cyneheard's retinue, who was godson of Osric, one of Cynewulf's ealdormen. The unnamed godson was wounded in the reprisal raid launched by



Cynewulf's men upon Cyneheard's (or rather his mistress's) enclosure. Given godparenthood's similarities with hostageship as a means of maintaining relations between groups,<sup>64</sup> both tragedies poetically demonstrated the ideal of a precedence of lordship over kinship.<sup>65</sup> These values are arguably significant in terms of the Anglo-Saxon, even Germanic, cultural context but the hostage here may also drive us back to an Insular context of kingship. In Ireland, the *Crith Gablach* lawcode distinguishes lesser hostages, kept in fetters, from those who were close to the king in the physical space of the royal household. In Cyneheard's retinue the notion of the hostage fighting for the king may not have been such a dramatic oddity—as we have seen, the hostage fighting for a captor was evidently used enough as a literary motif for it to have been relatively normal. What strikes me as noteworthy in this context is that the physical space occupied by the household—including high-status hostages—was thereby reflected in the functions of the group which was with the king in battle.

### Hostages in the Landscape?

In three of these four instances discussed so far (Wealdhere's letter being the exception), hostages appear to reflect the holder's status, whether that holder were the Roman commander—later emperor—Titus, the West Saxon King Cynewulf, or, however much an eighth-century Northumbrian may have resented acknowledging it, the pagan overlord Penda. Nonetheless, we should not necessarily dismiss any 'practical' functions fulfilled by the above hostages, and the balance between the practicality of a threat and the status of holding a hostage, indeed being seen to hold a hostage, is an important one.

This paper began with the tribute lists of West Saxon rulers and the context of other forms of Insular kingship. The development of 'kingship' in a range of different forms provides us with models for an understanding of the transformation of political elites in the post-Imperial West, as expectations grew through the resources, indeed the wealth, that these elites controlled.<sup>66</sup> Seen through this lens, the varying scales within which Insular forms of kingship operated may have had more in common than they had differences in the early Middle Ages,<sup>67</sup> and while even if archaeologists of Anglo-Saxon England have not found the equivalent of one of what are sometimes seen as 'diagnostic' finds of Irish royal sites, 'hostage chains',<sup>68</sup> a final observation may be made regarding the granting of hostages. In early medieval Ireland, it had more than symbolic meaning: it was part of the ritual of kingship and the holding of hostages was, as Charles-Edwards has it, 'the mark of a king'.<sup>69</sup> As *Recholl Breth* declares, '[h]e is not a king who does not have hostages (*géill*) in fetters, and to whom no royal tribute (*cís flatha*) is rendered, and to whom no fines for breach of promulgated law (*feich cána*) are paid'.<sup>70</sup> While hostages might have been seen in 'semi-private' and controlled-access spaces of the royal household, open to the

privileged few, as we see in the spatial conditioning of the *Crith Gablach* of Ireland and perhaps the hostage in Cynewulf's retinue at *Mertun*,<sup>71</sup> this controlled visibility was also part of a public dimension of hostageship. The act of the receipt of hostages represented the status of kings and their base of clientship (however small that may have been), and with the hostage's value lying in the personal, recognisable identity, it made sense for this transaction to be public and witnessed by those who recognised a ruler's authority.<sup>72</sup>

A comment on the 'Mound of the Hostages' at Tara, a Neolithic tomb, associated in later medieval lore with the memory of the early Irish high king Cormac Mac Airt's construction of Tara itself, is worthwhile.<sup>73</sup> As Patrick Gleeson has recently shown, such monuments as Tara—important for small-scale rulers as for the high kings themselves—played an important role in the demonstration of power in a performative fashion which linked the prehistoric past with the early medieval present.<sup>74</sup> Although 'hostage mounds' are not directly evidenced in Anglo-Saxon England, could *gisl*-place-name elements in the English landscape have had a meaning which was related to hostages rather than the personal names *Gisla* (OE) or *Gisli* (ON)? It is an intriguing possibility and a small handful of examples, identified through a trawl of the various indexes of the *English Place-Names Society* volumes,<sup>75</sup> contain some sites of landscape significance, which may indicate a 'setting' for the handover or display of hostages (see Figure 3.2). *Gisls Bæc*, in Brightwell Baldwin, Oxfordshire,<sup>76</sup> and Guiseley, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which the editor attributes to an otherwise unrecorded personal name *Gīslīc*<sup>77</sup> (thus a diminutive 'Wee Gisla?'), are natural landscape features linked to a word which *could* mean 'hostage'. In the case of Guiseley, the natural feature is a clearing or glade (OE *lēah*). *Gisles Bæce*, recorded in a ninth-century charter for Brightwell Baldwin, is likely to be a ridge (i.e., 'back').<sup>78</sup> We have seen elsewhere in this volume how the personal name and the state of hostageship might blur into one another in the early medieval imagination, but the genitive *gisles* rather than *gislan*, may be indicative of 'the hostage's *bæc*' in this case, though Margaret Gelling and Doris Mary Stenton assumed it to be 'used as a personal name.'<sup>79</sup> Given that other boundary marks in this particular charter are personal names, they were sensible in making this assumption, especially given the lack of a definite article in the charter's reference, but the next charter boundary point on from *gisles bæce*, a certain *ceolulfes treope*, 'Ceolwulf's Tree,' is a boundary marker which recalls West Saxon and Mercian royal names. As Stuart Brooks and Stephen Miles note, it may have been an assembly place for an Anglo-Saxon site at Ewelme, an important 'productive site' associated with the royal estate of Benson.<sup>80</sup>

While other places contain *gisl* in some form as an element in their historical place-name<sup>81</sup> and perhaps there are more yet to be discovered among the field names to be included in future *English Place-Name Society* volumes<sup>82</sup> or missed by early editors, two places in Middlesex are worth mention: Islington and Isleworth. Isleworth's placename, attested in an 'early'

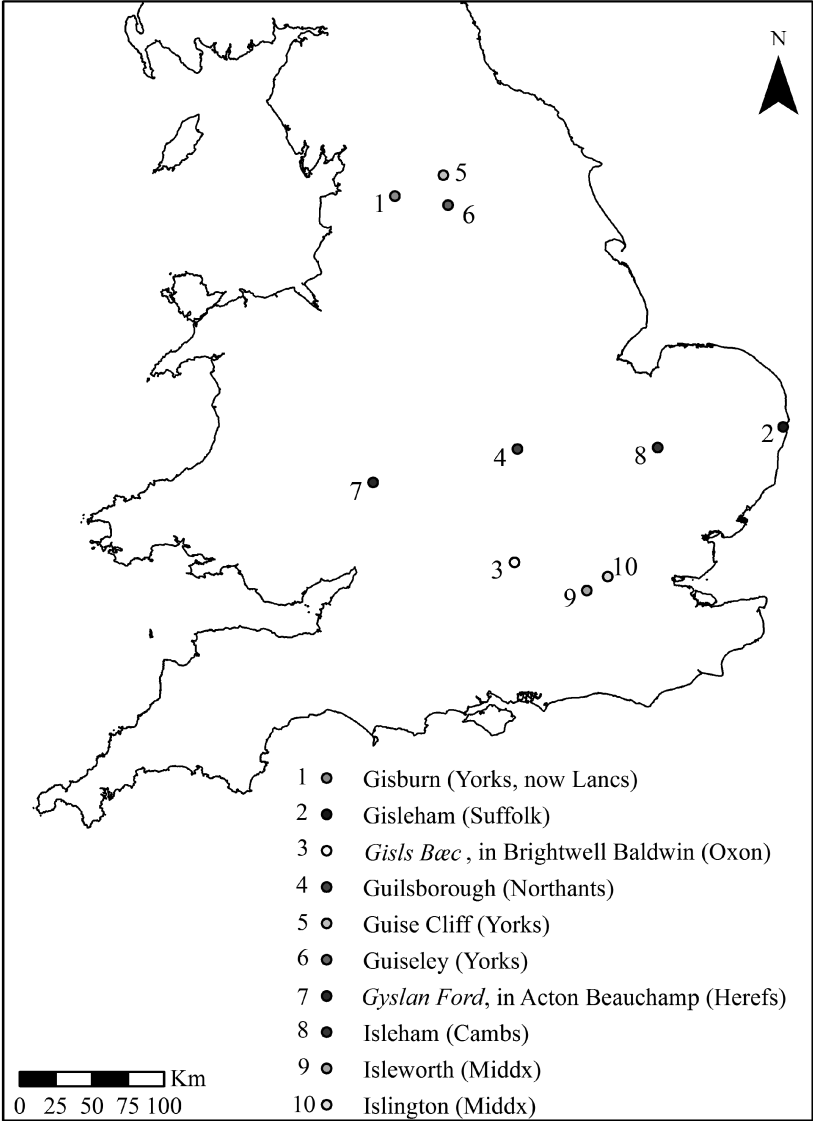


Figure 3.2 Place-names suggestive of hostages, discussed in the text. Map by Nathalie Barrett.

charter for the nunnery of Barking,<sup>83</sup> is read by its editors as linked to the personal name *Giselhere* (a variation of *Gisla*?). This may be unremarkable but for the possible connection with the assembly sites linked to the administrative landscape of hundreds characteristic of mid- and later Anglo-Saxon

England. What was known as 'Isleworth Hundred' in the twelfth century had been 'Hounslow Hundred' in Domesday Book in the eleventh, indicating that a 'mound or barrow . . . once must have existed at this place' (hence the place-name *hundes-hlæw*).<sup>84</sup> Hounslow and Isleworth are not the same place, of course, and any link must be made with reservations, especially as mounds presumably did not mean the same thing to all people, but the possibility of Isleworth's connection with the hundred meeting place lingers.

Islington, some eleven miles to the east, and in the neighbouring hundred of Ossulstone in Domesday Book, is recorded in a charter of c.1000 as *Gislandune*.<sup>85</sup> Naturally, the genitive form here links it to a personal name, Gisla, rather than *gīsl* (hostage), and thus *Gislandune* is 'Gisla's Hill/Down',<sup>86</sup> as opposed to the OE *Gīslsdun*, 'Hostage's Hill/Down,' but when the two settlements of Isleworth and Islington are taken together as two places with similar name origins in two different hundreds, the evidence is intriguing. The Thames provided a boundary between the kingdoms of the Middle Saxons and those of Kent and Surrey, and was only two miles to the south of Islington (admittedly with the old Roman city of London between Islington and the river), and Isleworth lay on the Thames' banks. Could these sites have defined the territorial authority of a nascent kingdom? Keith Bailey sensibly interpreted these place-names as linked to (legendary?) twin founder-figures of the former Middle Saxon kingdom, Gisla and Gislhere,<sup>87</sup> and the balance of evidence is, admittedly, much in favour of this. But if the study of hostages is in part the study of the possibilities of circumstances, it may be appropriate to remark that Bailey's hypothesis should not rule out the possibility that in a landscape of authority these were also sites associated with—or interpreted as—hostages.

## Conclusions

The reflection on place-names in the landscape remains, at best, speculative and indeed the link with observations on hostages is tentative, but we should not lose sight of the fact that these people mattered: the symbolism was itself a demonstration of both actual and potential power. Hostageship, in its practical and symbolic forms, seems entirely fitting for the context of what was effectively a new world of the emergence of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, in which clientship (to borrow from the Irish terminology) needed to be demonstrated in a recognisable fashion. Hostages represented the continuing reminder, whether at the court or in the public arena, of the moments of demonstrative power that allowed early medieval kingship to be fashioned in a way that created stories and personal links. It is interesting that of the early Anglo-Saxon hostages dealt with above, three—Bishop Wealdhere, the Franks Casket figure/s, and the unnamed Briton in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—are linked directly with a known 'moment' of transfer (albeit theoretical in Wealdhere's case), and indeed the reason for Oswiu's hostageship in Mercia looks to have been quite close to the surface

to a contemporary audience. Hostages therefore represented something to an audience, linking the present to a perceived moment in time that necessitated the hostage-donation.

Although drawing from a small sample is frustrating, it forces us to think of the possible pasts of Anglo-Saxon kingship in which hostages were part of the material culture of kingship, visible symbols of power displayed alongside high-status gold and silver items (which, we ought to remember, could also be imbued with personal characteristics, lest we assume that the objectification of hostages dehumanised them entirely). Such symbolic paraphernalia were received and bestowed at moments of a kingdom's history<sup>88</sup> and thus represented that history when retold in a royal setting. The Irish *Críth Gablach*'s layout of the royal household might give us a sense of this in that it placed free and chained hostages, along with the king and his closest aides, almost directly opposite the king's entertainers, including poets and harpists.<sup>89</sup> Did such parties make use of hostages as props—humiliated props, perhaps—in performances which helped to shape the royal dignity? While hostages appear to have been used as a meaningful tool that could be readily understood in many ways by a range of people who wished to make some form of agreement, perhaps what may have made them valuable at court was their ability to remind an audience of just what they represented. To that end, they help to shine a light, however dimly, on the personal element of early political power.

## Notes

- 1 Pre-viking age hostages have been unfinished business for me since I first studied Anglo-Saxon hostageship as a postgraduate in 1997 and chose to publish only on viking age hostages in 2006, so I am very grateful to the editors for the opportunity to address this topic. I also wish to record my thanks to Julia Crick, Catherine Cubitt, Guy Halsall, Adam Kosto, Barbara Yorke, and the late Patrick Wormald, whose comments and advice on this subject at various points have helped in the shaping of this paper.
- 2 Kosto, 21.
- 3 Ryan Lavelle, 'The Use and Abuse of Hostages in Later Anglo-Saxon England,' *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006): 269–96.
- 4 Paul Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings: Peace, Power and the Early Medieval Political Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 15–22.
- 5 Lavelle, 'Hostages,' 286–92.
- 6 Adam J. Kosto, 'Hostages in the Carolingian World,' *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 126, n. 11.
- 7 *Críth Gablach*, §§32 and 46: *Críth Gablach*, ed. D.A. Binchy (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1941), 18, 23; trans. E. MacNeill, 'Ancient Irish Law: the Law of Status or Franchise,' *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* 36 (1921–4): 301, 306.
- 8 Ryan Lavelle, 'Ine 70.1 and Royal Provision in Anglo-Saxon Wessex,' in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, eds. Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), 259–74.
- 9 Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Medieval Kingdoms in the British Isles,' in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. S. Bassett (London: Leicester

- University Press, 1989), 28–33; *Wales and the Britons, 350–1064* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 295–6 and 513–14.
- 10 *Historia Brittonum*, ch. 19, in *British History and the Welsh Annals*, ed. and trans. John Morris (Chichester: Phillimore, 1980), 22, 63. For discussion of this as a portrayal ‘in early medieval terms’ and the interpretation of *censum* as tribute, see Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, 323.
- 11 Charles-Edwards, *Wales*, 322.
- 12 Bart Jaski, *Early Irish Kingship and Succession* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 103–4.
- 13 Though a hostage perhaps blurred with a personal surety in clause 5 of the later Anglo-Saxon *Alfred-Guthrum* lawcode: *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1903–16), I, 128 (text); translation *EHD* Vol. 1, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock (London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 1979) [hereafter *EHD* 1], 417. See Lavelle, ‘Hostages,’ 291–2.
- 14 Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish and Welsh Kinship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 341–3.
- 15 Lavelle, ‘Hostages,’ 270. For *gisl*, see the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, accessed 13 May 2015, <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/dict/indices/headwordindexg.html>; for *gíall*, *Dictionary of the Irish Language: Based Mainly on Old and Middle Irish Materials*, ed. C.J. Sverdrup Marstrander et al. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1913–1976), available in a corrected edition as the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*, ed. G. Toner et al., accessed 13 May 2015, <http://www.dil.ie/>, G, column 78; *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru: A Dictionary of the Welsh Language*, ed. R.J. Thomas, 4 vols (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1950–2002), II, 1789; for the synonym *mechiau* (noted above, 37), see III, 2407.
- 16 Pierre Chaplais, ‘The Letter from Bishop Wealdhere of London to Archbishop Brihtwold of Canterbury: The Earliest Original “Letter Close” extant in the West,’ in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts and Libraries: Essays Presented to N.R. Ker*, ed. M. Parkes and A. Watson (London, 1978), 22–3; *EHD* 1, 792–3.
- 17 Bede, III.24, 288–95.
- 18 London, British Museum: Britain, Prehistory and Europe 1867,0120.1: L. Webster, ‘The Franks Casket,’ [catalogue no.70] in *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture, AD 600–900*, ed. L. Webster and J. Backhouse (London: The British Museum Press, 1991), 101–3; *The Franks Casket*, British Museum Objects in Focus (London: The British Museum Press, 2012).
- 19 *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.a. 755 (= 757): *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel with Supplementary Extracts from the Others*, ed. C. Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1892–9), I, 46–9; trans. ASC, 30–1.
- 20 ‘Debeam q[ui]a nullo modo possum inter illos reconciliare et quasi obses pacis fieri nisi maximum communionis consortium inter nos misceatur q[uod] nec uolo nec ausus sum agree nisi tue licentie uoluntas adnuerit’. Chaplais, ‘Letter,’ 22 (text); *EHD* 1, 793 (trans.).
- 21 Kershaw, *Peaceful Kings*, 243–4.
- 22 Bede IV.21, 400–1.
- 23 Nicholas P. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), 80; Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c.650–c.850* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 14, 260; Chaplais, ‘Letter,’ 3–5.
- 24 As well as the appearance in Aldhelm’s work, Paul is depicted in Northumbria on the Ruthwell Cross: Fred Orton and Ian Wood, with Clare A. Lees, *Fragments of History: Rethinking the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 183–90.
- 25 Cf. Jerome, *Vita Sancti Pauli*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 217 vols (Paris, 1844–64), XXIII, ch. 6: ‘palmarum fructus eidem ad uaticum, quasi pacis obsides, offerebat’. I am grateful to Adam Kosto for this reference.

- 26 For later Anglo-Saxon references to hostageship as metaphorical guarantee, see Mary's appointment by God 'as a surety in this world' ('to gisle on middan-gearde') in R. Morris, ed., *The Blickling Homilies*, Early English Text Society Old Ser. 58 (Oxford, 1874), 8–9, and Malmesbury, ch. 141, 228–9.
- 27 Aldhelm, *De Virginitate*, in prose, ch. XXVIII, and verse, lines 774–96, in *Aldhelmi Opera*, 265 and 385–7; *Aldhelm Prose*, 87–8, and *Aldhelm Poetic*, 120; for further discussion of Aldhelm, see Katherine Barker, this volume.
- 28 Chaplais, 'Letter,' 19 and 18 (cited in order of quotation).
- 29 Waldere, in *Old English Minor Heroic Poems*, ed. J. Hill, Durham Medieval and Renaissance Texts 2 (Durham and Toronto: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies; 3rd edn, 2009), 39–41; Peter S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), 35–7, addresses the reputation of honour of the protagonist in the more extensive Continental Latin version of the poem.
- 30 *Ordinance of the Dunsæte*, ch. 9: Liebermann, ed., *Gesetze*, I, 378; F. Noble, trans., *Offa's Dyke Reviewed*, ed. Margaret Gelling, British Archaeological Reports British Ser. 114 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1983), 109. A recent review of the tenth-century context of the treaty is M. Fordham, 'Peacekeeping and Order on the Anglo-Welsh Frontier in the Early Tenth Century,' *Midland History* 32 (2007): 1–18. George Molyneux suggests a later date in 'The Ordinance Concerning the *Dunsæte* and the Anglo-Welsh Frontier in the Late Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 40 (2011): 249–72.
- 31 I am grateful to Catherine Cubitt for this suggestion.
- 32 Bede III.24, 290–1.
- 33 Although Cynewise's own family is unidentifiable, Pauline Stafford notes her evident importance in 'Political Women in Mercia, Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries,' in *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, ed. M.P. Brown and C. Farr (London: Continuum, 2001), 36.
- 34 N.J. Higham, *The Convert Kings: Power and Religious Affiliation in Early Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1997), 240–1.
- 35 D. Tyler, 'An Early Mercian Hegemony: Penda and Overkingship in the Seventh Century,' *Midland History* 30 (2005): 1–19, notes (10) that the Oswiu/Ecgfrith episode indicates the 'possibility' of 'hostage taking as a routine part of Penda's overkingship'; it may be apparent here that I read the occasion as a probability. The link between tribute and overlordship is discussed in Ryan Lavelle, 'Towards a Political Contextualization of Peacemaking in Anglo-Saxon England,' in *Peace and Negotiation: Strategies for Coexistence in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. D. Wolfthal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 47.
- 36 See here N.J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in Context* (London: Routledge, 2006), especially 187–212.
- 37 Bede, III.1, 212–13.
- 38 For discussion of such harm, see Alice Hicklin, this volume, as well as my own 'Hostages,' 292–5.
- 39 Bede, III.21, 150–1.
- 40 See Thomas Charles-Edwards, 'Anglo-Saxon Kinship Revisited,' in *The Anglo-Saxons From the Migration Period to the Eighth Century: An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. J. Hines (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998): 182–4, and Barbara Yorke, *Rex Doctissimus: Bede and King Aldfrith of Northumbria*, Jarrow Lecture 2009 (Jarrow: Parish of Jarrow, 2009).
- 41 Webster, 'Franks Casket,' 101–3.
- 42 Josephus, *The Jewish War, Books IV–VII*, ed. and trans. H. St. J. Thackeray, Loeb's Classical Library (London: Loeb, 1928), VI.5, 496–7. For knowledge of Josephus' work by Bede (though of course this does not mean that Bede was the Casket artist's intermediary), see A.P. Scheil, *The Footsteps of Israel: Understanding Jews in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan



- Press, 2004), 74. I am grateful to Elton O.S. Medeiros for this reference, and for discussion of this section of the paper.
- 43 Carol Neuman de Vegvar, 'Images of Women in Anglo-Saxon Art: I. Hostages: Women in the 'Titus' Scene on the Franks Casket,' *Old English Newsletter* 24:1 (1990): 44–5.
- 44 Bede, IV.22, 400–5; M. Strickland, 'Slaughter, Slavery or Ransom? The Impact of the Conquest on Conduct in Warfare,' in *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1992), 41–59. See also David A.E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Mediaeval England: From the Reign of King Alfred until the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), 70–4.
- 45 Neuman De Vegvar, 'Images.' However, Neuman de Vegvar's more recent paper, 'Reading the Franks Casket: Contexts and Audiences,' in *Intertexts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Paul E. Szarmach*, ed. Virginia Blanton and H. Scheck (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2008), 141–59, makes no reference to female hostageship on the Casket.
- 46 Ryan Lavelle, 'Hostages and Peacemaking in Anglo-Saxon England' (University of York, Unpublished MA dissertation, 1997), 46.
- 47 For the central positioning of brooches on open-fronted cloaks in the eighth and ninth centuries, see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986; revised and enlarged edn, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 148–50.
- 48 See Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, 169 (fig. 126).
- 49 L.E. Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket,' in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. J. Hawkes and S. Mills (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 227–46.
- 50 For discussion of these, see below.
- 51 Josephus, *Jewish War*, VI.5, 496–7.
- 52 Josephus, *Jewish War*, VI.5, 496–7.
- 53 Compare the *Old English Orosius*' pithy account of Titus and Vespasian's post-Jerusalem triumph (*The Old English Orosius*, ed. Janet Bately, Early English Text Society Supplementary Ser. 6 (London: Early English Text Society, 1980), VI.7, 138) with the Latin original's more detailed version (*Pauli Orosii Historiarum adversum Paganos libri VII*, ed. C.F.W. Zangemeister (Leipzig: Teubner, 1889), VII.9; trans. A. T. Fear, *Orosius, Seven Books of History against the Pagans* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 339), though it should be noted that the Old English author had a lot of triumphal depictions to work with! For the Continental uses of hostages in triumph, see Kosto, 'Hostages,' 137, citing M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 376.
- 54 See generally S. Kalifa, 'Singularités matrimoniales chez les anciens germains: le rapt et le droit de la femme à disposer d'elle-même,' *Revue historique de droit français*, 48 (1970): 199–225.
- 55 D.H. Haigh, 'Yorkshire Runic Monuments,' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 2 (1873): 264–5 (albeit with a mistaken sixth-century attribution); the possibility is noted by Webster, *Franks Casket*, 23.
- 56 For *frīðgisl*, see above, 40; the appearance of *foregislas* in the ninth century is discussed in Lavelle, 'Hostages,' 287.
- 57 *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, accessed 13 May 2015.
- 58 Scheil, *Footsteps*, 19.
- 59 *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* 755 (= 757): *Two Chronicles*, ed. Plummer, I, 46–9 (text); trans. ASC, 30–1.
- 60 See Janet Bately, 'The Compilation of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 60 B.C. to A.D. 890: Vocabulary as Evidence,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 64 (1978): 93–129. The Alfredian significance of this episode is much-discussed but



- see especially Donald G. Scragg, 'Wifcybbe and the Morality of the Cynewulf and Cyneheard Episode in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,' in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately*, ed. J. Roberts and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 179–85, Barbara Yorke, 'The Representation of Early West Saxon History in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,' in *Reading the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: Language, Literature, History*, ed. A. Jorgensen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 141–59, and Courtney Konshuh, 'Fighting with a Lytle Werode: Alfred's Retinue in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,' *The Medieval Chronicle* 10 (2016): 95–117.
- 61 Lavelle, 'Hostages,' 284.
  - 62 Baker, *Honour*, 36, noting the appearance of the Germanic hero Waltharius in this context.
  - 63 M.A.L. Locherbie-Cameron, 'The Men Named in the Poem,' in *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. Donald Scragg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 242, who, like Baker above, notes the literary nature of a hostage fighting for his guardian.
  - 64 I am grateful to Guy Halsall for discussion on this point.
  - 65 Cf. Joseph Lynch, *Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 194–6. For the issue of lordship, see R. Woolf, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord in the *Germania* and in *The Battle of Maldon*,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 5 (1976), 63–81; cf. R. Frank, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord in *The Battle of Maldon*: Anachronism or *Nouvelle Vague*?,' in *People and Places in Northern Europe 500–1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. Ian N. Wood and Niels Lund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1991), 95–106.
  - 66 A useful discussion of the novelty of Anglo-Saxon kingship in the sixth century, linked to the control of resources, is provided by N.J. Higham, 'From Tribal Kingdoms to Christian Kings,' in N.J. Higham and M.J. Ryan, *The Anglo-Saxon World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), esp. 143–4. See also C. Scull, 'Social Archaeology and Anglo-Saxon Kingdom Origins,' *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History* 10 (1999): 17–24, and, taking a wide perspective on a discussion of social competition, J.A.W. Nicolay, *The Splendour of Power: Early Medieval Kingship and the use of Gold and Silver in the Southern North Sea Area (5th to 7th Century AD)* (Groningen: Barkhuis Publishing and University of Groningen Library, 2014), 353–9.
  - 67 Useful studies here are Alex Woolf, 'Community, Identity and Kingship in Early England,' in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. W.O. Frazer and A. Tyrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 91–109, and P. Wormald, 'Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Kingship: Some Further Thoughts,' in *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Culture*, ed. P.E. Szarmach and V. Darrow Oggins (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 151–83; Guy Halsall, *Worlds of Arthur* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 270–4.
  - 68 See, e.g., discussion of 'hostage chains' found at the royal site of Lagore, Co. Meath, in H. Mytum, *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland* (London: Routledge, 1992), 114–15.
  - 69 Charles-Edwards, *Early*, 342.
  - 70 *Corpus iuris hibernici: ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum recognovit*, ed. D.A. Binchy, 6 vols (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies), I, 219, cited by Jaski, *Early*, 104.
  - 71 In this respect there may have been similarities with the material accoutrements of early kingship. Barbara Yorke, 'The Oliver's Battery Hanging-Bowl Burial from Winchester, and its Place in the Early History of Wessex,' in *Intersections: The Archaeology and History of Christianity in England, 400–1200: Papers in Honour of Martin Biddle and Birthe Kjolbye-Biddle*, ed. M. Henig and N. Ramsay, British Archaeological Reports International Ser. 1610 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007), 85, notes the articulation of the authority of 'locally-based nobles'

- (equivalents of the Irish *rí* of a *tuath*?) in the display of hanging bowls in spaces where access was controlled by such nobles. Given the propensity of personal characteristics to be attributed to inanimate objects in early medieval culture, perhaps there is not so much difference between such objects and hostages.
- 72 Seán Duffy, *Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2013), *passim* (see, e.g., the receipt by Brian and later cession of Leinster hostages at 123), albeit in a later ‘viking’ period. I gratefully acknowledge Charles Insley for this reference.
  - 73 Muiris O’Sullivan, *Duma na nGiall: The Mound of the Hostages, Tara* (Dublin: University College Dublin School of Archaeology, 2005).
  - 74 See P. Gleeson, ‘Constructing Kingship in Early Medieval Ireland: Power, Place and Ideology,’ *Medieval Archaeology* 56 (2012): 1–33; see also N.B. Aitchison, *Armagh and the Royal Centres in Early Medieval Ireland: Monuments, Cosmology, and the Past* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer for Cruithne Press, 1994), esp. 50–130.
  - 75 This was supplemented by a search on the *Survey of English Place-Names* website, <<http://epns.nottingham.ac.uk>>, which was at the time of the search (4 September 2015) only available in an incomplete beta version. I am grateful to Jayne Carroll for advice on this.
  - 76 S 217
  - 77 S 1453. Discussed by A.H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire Part 4*, English Place-Name Society 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), 147.
  - 78 Margaret Gelling and Doris Mary Stenton, *The Place-Names of Oxfordshire Part 1*, English Place-Name Society 23 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 122. Although *bæce* is not an unlikely textual variant of *bēce*, beech-tree, it would be rendered *bæcan* in the dative form for a charter boundary. *Dictionary of Old English Plant-Names*, under ‘bēce’, accessed 22 June 2015.
  - 79 A *Gyslan Ford* appears in the bounds of land at Acton Beauchamp (in Herefordshire, a county not yet covered by the EPNS): S 786 (AD 972), in a charter associated with Pershore (P.A. Stokes, ‘King Edgar’s Charter for Pershore (AD 972),’ *Anglo-Saxon England*, 37 (2008): 47 [31–78]). Here the genitive form may suggest a personal name, though further exploration of that landscape (not undertaken for this paper) may yet be worthwhile.
  - 80 Stephen Milesen and Stuart Brooks with Jane Kershaw, ‘A Multi-Phase Anglo-Saxon Site in Ewelme,’ *Oxoniensia* 79 (2014): 5, 22. I am grateful to John Baker and Stephen Milesen for discussion of this site.
  - 81 Gisburn (Yorks.), Guilsborough (Northants), Guise Cliff (Yorks.), Isleham (Cambs.) are possible examples, though most likely linked to the personal names Gisla or Gisli, returned from a search on the beta-version of the online *Survey of English Place-Names*, accessed 4 Sept. 2015, as is the now-lost *Giselkirke* in Nottinghamshire: J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer and F.M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Nottinghamshire*, English Place-Name Society 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), xxiii.
  - 82 Gislesham (in Suffolk, outside EPNS coverage) is logically attributed to a personal name by W. W. Skeat, *The Place-Names of Suffolk* (Cambridge: Cambridge Antiquarian Society, 1913), 53.
  - 83 S 1246.
  - 84 J.E.B. Gover, A. Mawer, and F.M. Stenton, with S.J. Madge, *The Place-Names of Middlesex, apart from the City of London Part 2*, English Place-Name Society 18 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942), 24.
  - 85 S 1458a.
  - 86 As interpreted by Mawer et al., *Middlesex*, 124.
  - 87 K. Bailey, ‘The Middle Saxons,’ in *Origins*, ed. Bassett, 108–22.
  - 88 Nicolay, *Splendour*, 264–94.

- 89 *Críth Gablach* §46, ed. Binchy, 23 (trans. MacNeill, 'Ancient Irish Law,' p. 306). See A.J. Fletcher, *Drama and the Performing Arts in Pre-Cromwellian Ireland: a Repertory of Sources and Documents from the Earliest Times until c.1642* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), 6–7.

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## 4 The Role of Hostages in the Danish Conquests of England and Norway, 1013–30

*Alice Hicklin*

Our sole contemporary account of the Danish conquest of England by Swein Forkbeard, king of Denmark, begins innocuously enough: ‘Before the month of August [1013], King Swein came with his fleet to Sandwich.’<sup>1</sup> Just four months later the English king Æthelred II sailed to Normandy and into exile, and ‘the full nation’ recognised Swein as king over England.<sup>2</sup> The timing of Swein’s arrival could not have been worse for the Anglo-Saxons, who had already endured some twenty-five years of sustained viking attacks. These raids included those conducted by the devastating ‘great fleet’ in 1006–7,<sup>3</sup> and those of the army led by Thorkell the Tall in 1009–12, which culminated in the martyrdom of Ælfheah, archbishop of Canterbury, at the hands of Thorkell’s followers.<sup>4</sup> Swein had led multiple raids on England during Æthelred’s reign,<sup>5</sup> but the events of 1013 represented something of a different order entirely, focused not on the rapid acquisition of wealth but on the subjection of the English to Danish rule.

This article establishes the importance of hostages given by the Anglo-Saxon elite to Swein and manner in which the author of the 1013 annal in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* represented these transactions.<sup>6</sup> It then turns to the hostages’ mutilation at the hands of Swein’s son Cnut, an event that has been the subject of less scholarly analysis than it deserves. The complex and developing attitudes towards mutilation in Anglo-Saxon England during the tenth and eleventh centuries provide multiple layers of meaning to this incident, and a parallel mutilation carried out in tenth-century Saxony suggests that enacting such violence against hostages may have been a mode of behaviour peculiar to viking warbands operating at this time. A survey of Cnut’s behaviour towards hostages and their donors during his conquests of England in 1016 and Norway in 1028–30 reveals that despite the failure of the hostage-agreement in 1013–14, the Danish royal pretender continued to participate in the practice, testament to its utility in securing submission and controlling the political elite.

The chronicler’s account of 1013 suggests that the Danish conquest took place rapidly and with little resistance from the English elite, particularly in northern England: ‘And then at once Earl Uhtred and all the Northumbrians submitted to him [Swein], as did all the people of Lindsey, and then

all the people belonging to the district of the Five Boroughs, and quickly afterwards all the Danish settlers north of Watling Street, and hostages were given to him from every shire.<sup>7</sup> Numerous scholars have interpreted the immediate submission of those north of Watling Street, apparently without conflict, as an indication that Swein expected their acquiescence and perhaps even their support.<sup>8</sup> While some argue that residual ethnic and cultural ties to Scandinavia shaped the northern magnates' behaviour,<sup>9</sup> others claim that the submission of the north reflected political disaffection and alienation amongst the magnates which, by 1013, had reached crisis point.<sup>10</sup>

Swein may have sought out one family in particular, that of Ælfgifu of Northampton, as potential allies.<sup>11</sup> Ælfgifu's father Ælfhelm had been executed on the orders of King Æthelred in 1006, while the king ordered her brothers Wulfheah and Ufegeat to be blinded.<sup>12</sup> The kingroup nevertheless remained a significant political force in the Midlands,<sup>13</sup> and united with the family of Leofwine, *dux* of the Hwicce, against the rising power of Eadric Streona, the most powerful of the king's advisors and an apparent personal favourite of Æthelred.<sup>14</sup> The manifold evidence for their defection from Æthelred includes Cnut's union with Ælfgifu which occurred perhaps as early as 1013, and the evidence that the Danish army made camp at Gainsborough, a town that lay in the earldom of Ælfgifu's uncle Godwine. Furthermore, Swein sent the Anglo-Saxon hostages he received to be watched over by Cnut there, an indication of the trust he placed in the townspeople and his perceived security of the Danish base in England. Finally, after Swein's unexpected death, only the people of Lindsey continued to support the Danish dynasty, fighting alongside Cnut against the recently-returned Æthelred.<sup>15</sup>

Indications that other magnates preferred to ally with Swein are less forthcoming, yet scholars have almost universally accepted that northern England submitted without resistance. To what extent is this interpretation drawn from the chronicler's presentation of the events of 1013? Two features of the annal support this inference. Firstly, the northern shires capitulated rapidly: Uhtred, earl of Northumbria, and his men, for instance, submitted 'at once.'<sup>16</sup> The chronicler's breathless narrative telescopes the submissions of different groups into one event: first the Northumbrians and the people of Lindsey submitted, then the inhabitants of the Five Boroughs, and then the Danish *here*,<sup>17</sup> encouraging the impression that representatives from each northern shire came to Swein at Gainsborough, where they surrendered in unison. There is no indication that the army left Gainsborough between their arrival and their conquest of the north. Secondly, the chronicler states that the army's strategy changed once they crossed the important political boundary at Watling Street: 'When he had crossed the Watling Street [border], they did the greatest damage that any army could do.'<sup>18</sup> This, perhaps, indicates that while Swein's army attacked those in the south, they behaved differently in the northern reaches of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>19</sup>



Yet such distinctions between the army's activities in the north and south can be countered. Like those in the north, the citizens of Oxford and Winchester are also said to have submitted 'quickly' (*sona*),<sup>20</sup> and there is no hint in the chronicler's narrative that the Danish army attacked these territories. Only London is said to have defended itself, perhaps bolstered by the presence of Æthelred and the Danish mercenary Thorkell the Tall within its walls.<sup>21</sup> The surrender of the south-west, too, bears close resemblance to that of the north: Ealdorman Æthelmær and the thegns of western England came to Swein at Bath and submitted to him there.<sup>22</sup> The recorded submissions demonstrate the comprehensive nature of Swein's conquest, and do not make a distinction between the reception Swein received from those south of Watling Street and those north of the boundary. The capitulations of two of Æthelred's most important advisors, Uhtred in Northumbria and Æthelmær in the far south, bracket Swein's conquest, each submission mirroring the other in the chronicle narrative.

The hostages the Anglo-Saxons gave to Swein further undermine the suggestion that he treated those in northern and southern England differently. According to the chronicler's account, Swein required hostages from all shires north of Watling Street, including those inhabited by Danish settlers, just as he did from those in southern England, in Oxford, Winchester, London and the south-west.<sup>23</sup> Despite the possible alliances made with certain individuals, Swein evidently still required all the key members of the Anglo-Saxon elite to give hostages.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to connect those who were given to particular individuals or regions.<sup>24</sup> The only named donors are, as we have seen, Uhtred and Æthelmær, although the comprehensive nature of the conquest makes it probable that most ealdormen and prominent thegns gave hostages. Writing in the mid-twelfth century, William of Malmesbury describes those given as noble boys, a detail that accords with general trends in hostage-giving but may be inference.<sup>25</sup> In the absence of corroborative accounts it is difficult to assess the accuracy of the chronicler's representation of hostage-giving during the Danish conquest, but one conclusion is clear: he demonstrated the comprehensive submission of the English through the donation of hostages, alongside other markers of subordination including oath-swearing and the payment of tribute or provisions.

Despite the totality of Swein's achievement, his unexpected death in February 1014 resulted in a reversal of fortune for the Danish army and Anglo-Saxons alike.<sup>26</sup> The chronicler reports that the English recalled Æthelred from his exile in Normandy, on the condition that he rule more justly than before. In return, Æthelred promised to reform, and forgive those who had betrayed him, cementing his return by exchanging oaths and pledges with his followers, after which the king and his advisors 'pronounced every Danish king an outlaw from England forever.'<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the Danish fleet, stationed at Gainsborough, elected Cnut as their king.<sup>28</sup> This somewhat laconic account almost certainly conceals a more complex and

tumultuous period in Anglo-Saxon history. If members of the Anglo-Saxon nobility had supported Swein in 1013, it stands to reason that in the confusion after his sudden death certain groups may have chosen to support Cnut over Æthelred.<sup>29</sup> The chronicler records a pocket of support for Cnut in Lindsey, which soon attracted the king's wrath. Æthelred took his 'full army' (*fulre fyrde*) there shortly after Easter, and his army were evidently merciless: 'all the men who could be got at were killed.'<sup>30</sup> Yet Cnut and his fleet had already fled, sailing south to Sandwich.

To the Anglo-Saxons it may have seemed that the validity of their promises to Swein, secured by hostages, had ended with his death. Cnut, however, seems to have been under the impression that their loyalty should be transferred to his own cause, with his dominance over the English and right to rule demonstrated by the Anglo-Saxon hostages he still held.<sup>31</sup> That Cnut felt entitled to the English throne is supported by the account of Swein's death in the mid-eleventh century *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. The anonymous author, generally sympathetic to the Danish conquerors, writes that on his deathbed Swein gave his royal sceptre to Cnut—an act that symbolically and physically imbued his son with the authority to rule England.<sup>32</sup> That many of the English rejected Cnut in favour of Æthelred may have constituted in Danish eyes a violation of the agreement the hostages represented. At Sandwich, the Danish prince mutilated the Anglo-Saxon hostages in his custody: 'And he then turned south till he reached Sandwich, and he caused to be put ashore the hostages who had been given to his father, and he cut off their hands, ears and noses.'<sup>33</sup> He then set sail for Denmark to recover before returning to attempt his own conquest of England in the following year.

Reactions to the mutilation in both contemporary and later sources are surprisingly muted. The Anglo-Saxon chronicler condemns Cnut's betrayal of the 'wretched' (*earme*) people of Lindsey, while he describes Æthelred's payment of tribute to the Danish mercenary Thorkell in the winter of 1014 as having occurred 'on top of all these evils,' but he does not explicitly criticise the mutilation.<sup>34</sup> William of Malmesbury condemns Cnut's actions, decrying the act as 'in defiance of law, human and divine . . . [and] an outrageous attack on the innocent.'<sup>35</sup> Yet his is a lone voice amongst the post-Conquest chroniclers, and the mutilation has attracted little attention from modern historians. Cumulatively, these reactions give the impression that such violence was contextually unremarkable, and perhaps even commonplace.

A search for similar violence against hostages in early medieval Europe, however, reveals the rarity of such incidents: just eight cases survive in the written record, three of which took place in England, Britain and Ireland before 1066.<sup>36</sup> In his recent monograph, Adam Kostó demonstrates that most of these cases suggest only a tenuous connection between the failure of the agreement secured by hostages and their execution.<sup>37</sup> In most cases, the execution occurred for another reason: in 960, for instance, the king of

West Francia Lothar III ordered the execution of a hostage after he had participated in treason against the king. Another hostage in Lothar's custody was judged innocent and remained unharmed.<sup>38</sup> The handful of cases of hostage-execution underline the sense that such actions were unusual, even exceptional, in instances where execution took place after an agreement broke down. Why, then, were so few hostages harmed in early medieval Europe? It seems that in certain contexts the political value of hostages outweighed their primary role as guarantees of behaviour, keeping them safe despite the termination of the agreement they represented. While hostages therefore functioned on a practical level to secure promises or confirm obligations, they also bore a symbolic value that endured even if the agreement did not, as signifiers of submission and conduits of acculturation between donor and recipient.

The violence perpetrated against the Anglo-Saxon hostages in 1014 is thus anomalous. Only one other case survives of a hostage-mutilation of this kind from the early medieval period, recorded in the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg, a vitally important source for the history of tenth- and eleventh-century Saxony.<sup>39</sup> As in 1014, a viking army perpetrated the violence. As he was to stand as a hostage, Thietmar participated in negotiations and personally witnessed the mutilation.

The incident took place after Thietmar's three maternal uncles, Henry, Siegfried and Udo, attacked a viking fleet that had been raiding along the River Elbe in 994. Their campaign was disastrous: the army killed Udo and captured Henry, Siegfried, and a certain Count Adalgar. The war band agreed to ransom the men back to their families in return for an unprecedented amount of tribute. In order to expedite the collection of this ransom they released Henry and Adalgar, who as a condition of their freedom gave three and two hostages respectively. Siegfried was also allowed to go free, if he too gave hostages. As the Saxon noble was childless, his sister arranged for her son Thietmar to stand as a hostage. Thietmar describes his role: 'I came and set forth, on a Friday, wearing the secular clothing in which I was to be given to the pirates as a hostage.'<sup>40</sup> Before he could fulfil his obligation, however, Siegfried escaped, and the viking war band responded by punishing those still in their custody. It is unclear from Thietmar's account whether they survived: 'Roused by a common anger, they cut off the noses, ears and hands of the priest, my cousin, and all the other hostages who were thrown outside into the harbour. Then, as they [the vikings] were fleeing, each man was rescued by his kinsman, and at the same time there was an upwelling of unheard-of grief.'<sup>41</sup>

The similarities between the incident and that of 1014 are apparent. The parallels become more striking when one considers that this particular type of mutilation—in which those responsible left eyes and genitals intact but removed their victims' noses, hands and ears—appears to be unique to these two incidents.<sup>42</sup> Swein Forkbeard led armies operating in Western Europe in both 994 and 1013. Yet his involvement in the Elbe incident is unlikely: Insular sources record attacks by Swein on London, southern England and

the Isle of Man in 994–5, making his presence in Saxony chronologically unlikely.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Thietmar's deep hostility to Swein<sup>44</sup> suggests that if he had been involved in the mutilation of Thietmar's kinsmen his role would not have been omitted from the account.<sup>45</sup> Nor can Cnut be connected to the Elbe attack; he was at most four years old in 994. The possibility that members of the Elbe war band also sailed with Cnut twenty years later is a consideration, but it seems probable that the two attacks were carried out by two distinct groups of viking raiders. If so, the accounts may reveal a specific mode of behaviour practiced by Danish warbands of the era against those in their custody.

The two mutilations differ in one crucial way, however. Whilst the Elbe vikings may have killed their hostages, or at least been indifferent to their survival, it is my belief that Cnut intended his hostages to survive: an enduring symbol of the Anglo-Saxons' faithlessness, and a warning to those who planned to resist him on his return in 1015. Before examining the motivation behind Cnut's behaviour, it is necessary to establish that survival after such injuries was possible in eleventh-century England.

The use of execution and mutilation as punishment had a long history in early medieval Europe, and while both appear in the earliest English law-codes,<sup>46</sup> bodily mutilation appeared as a penalty for criminal behaviour in legal texts with increasing frequency from the middle of the tenth century.<sup>47</sup> By the early eleventh century, non-fatal mutilation had replaced 'comprehensive' mutilation and execution in the case of lesser crimes, attested by a number of sources, including the *Translation and Miracles of St Swithun* composed by Lantfred of Winchester, and Cnut's law-code of 1018.<sup>48</sup> A particularly important instance of such non-fatal mutilation appears in the late eleventh-century collection known as *Hemming's Cartulary*, and concerns one Æthelwine, nephew of the Mercian ealdorman Leofric, who had lost both his hands whilst serving as a hostage to the Danes. Many have concluded that Æthelwine may have numbered amongst the hostages harmed in 1014.<sup>49</sup> If so, Æthelwine's survival confirms that at least one of the Anglo-Saxon hostages lived through the mutilation.

Although certainly life-threatening, mutilation in the eleventh century clearly did not always prove fatal. Concurrently, if not consequently, bodily mutilation emerged as a visual signifier of sin and criminality in contemporary literature. In his hexametrical adaptation of Lantfred's work, Wulfstan Cantor introduced the following passage to his source text: 'The king's agents search through the depths of the forests and robbers are sought in hidden recesses, and those who are dismembered provide a public display. And terror seized all hearts with trepidation.'<sup>50</sup> While the robbers' presence in the forest gives the first clue to their identity as criminals, it is their disfigured bodies that horrify spectators and confirm their identity as thieves.

Mutilation may not always have ended the life of those who endured it, yet it permanently marked them. The act, designed to elicit penance and salvation, simultaneously created permanently shaming and humiliating wounds. When King Æthelred's youngest son Alfred Ætheling and his followers

returned to England to try and seize the kingdom in 1036, the reigning king Harold Harefoot ordered the capture of the men and their mutilation; they died of their wounds shortly after.<sup>51</sup> Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe writes that, despite Alfred's innocence and the unjust nature of the violence enacted against him, 'the spectacle of such a body continually announces both crime and punishment.'<sup>52</sup> Certainly, the authors of the C recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Encomium Emmae* viewed the prince's mutilation as an event of scandalous brutality by the Anglo-Saxon elite, the effects of which endured into the 1050s.<sup>53</sup> O'Brien O'Keeffe does not connect the mutilation of 1036 with the less remarked-upon violence of 1014, but the parallels between the two are clear: both acts of violence harmed members of the Anglo-Saxon nobility who were innocent of any crime.

By participating in such a mode of behaviour against his father's hostages, Cnut shamed the boys and young men in his custody, furnishing them with lifelong physical deformities that were, in contemporary Anglo-Saxon thought, visually connected to sin and criminality.<sup>54</sup> As in 1036, the elite status of the hostages doubtlessly made their harm more shocking to contemporary witnesses.<sup>55</sup> Returning to William of Malmesbury's account of 1014, it is evident that William's outrage centred upon two facets of the incident: that the boys were 'innocent' and that they were 'boys of high birth and elegant upbringing.'<sup>56</sup> William's reference to the innocence of those disfigured provides a salient reminder of one of the episode's most distinguishing features, and of a unique aspect of the practice of hostage-giving. Like the ætheling Alfred, and in contrast with those who underwent mutilation as punishment, those harmed had not participated in wrongdoing themselves. Rather, they stood as proxies for those whom Cnut believed had betrayed him. The mutilation, therefore, shamed two parties: the hostages who endured the physical punishment, but—and perhaps more importantly—the Anglo-Saxons who had abandoned them to their fate by first giving hostages and then allying with Æthelred over Cnut. In many cases the hostage-donors would have been the fathers, uncles, or brothers of the hostages, men who would now be forced to confront the consequences of their actions on a daily basis.

The mutilation of 1014 therefore carried greater symbolic importance than has hitherto been appreciated. Far from being an act of 'spasmodic violence,' to borrow the term so famously levelled against Æthelred by Sir Frank Stenton, the harming of these hostages represented a calculated act with multiple layers of meaning.<sup>57</sup> In her examination of the blinding of captives in eleventh-century Byzantium, Catherine Holmes asserts that 'the brutal treatment of some prisoners may have accompanied the dangling of the carrot of future rewards: both tactics were ways of encouraging as many of Byzantium's foes as possible to surrender without future fighting.'<sup>58</sup> In England, too, Cnut's act of mutilation should be interpreted in the context of his intended return. Despite their brutal injuries, the hostages still possessed the ability to see, to reproduce and—crucially—to speak of their

ordeal. They provided visual evidence of Cnut's determination to rule, and warned of the retribution that those who betrayed the king could expect. Yet the removal of their hands incapacitated them, a form of impotence that rendered the former hostages unable to take up arms against Cnut on his return. The impact on these men and their families would have been enormous, and when Cnut arrived back in England many would doubtlessly have been eager to avoid similar reprisals.

Cnut's conquest of England took a very different form to that of his father, characterised not by rapid conquest but by a series of battles against Æthelred's eldest surviving son Edmund Ironside.<sup>59</sup> The author of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records three hostage-donations that took place during Cnut's campaign, two of which may have ended in broken agreements. On his arrival at Sandwich, Cnut marched south-west towards Wessex. While Edmund and Eadric Streona briefly joined forces to unite against Cnut, they separated after 'the ealdorman wished to betray the ætheling.'<sup>60</sup> Bolstered by Eadric and the forty ships he had stolen from Æthelred, Cnut quickly forced the West Saxons to submit and give hostages and provisions: 'the West Saxons submitted and gave hostages and supplied the Danish army with horses.'<sup>61</sup> Despite the disastrous end to the hostage-agreement made in 1013, Cnut evidently still perceived the practice to be an efficacious means of binding the Anglo-Saxons to an agreement and securing their submission. Although Edmund recaptured Wessex in the following year, the fate of the hostages is unknown.

Uhtred and Edmund joined together in 1016, leading an army into the Midlands against Eadric Streona, while Cnut harried the eastern coast of England. By the time Uhtred abandoned his efforts in the west, Cnut had reached York. As he had done for Swein in 1013, Earl Uhtred offered hostages and submission to Cnut, although on this second occasion the chronicler makes the earl's resistance to Danish rule more apparent. Forced by circumstance, 'he [Uhtred] submitted then out of necessity, and with him all the Northumbrians, and he gave hostages. And nevertheless he was killed by the advice of Ealdorman Eadric, and with him Thurcetel, Nafena's son.'<sup>62</sup> The account uniquely describes the harm of a hostage-donor, and to modern eyes makes little sense: Cnut appears to have invalidated the agreement he initiated by executing Uhtred, immediately negating the function of the hostages.<sup>63</sup> It may be that Cnut agreed to break the agreement to remove Uhtred from power, in the knowledge that the hostages he held from prominent Northumbrians would guarantee their continued loyalty. Although at first glance no reference is made to the fate of these hostages, the recorded execution of Thurcetel son of Nafena alongside Uhtred might suggest that Thurcetel had been a hostage given in the transaction.<sup>64</sup> Regardless of Thurcetel's identity, the episode demonstrates that Cnut was willing to bend the terms of an agreement made with someone who he perceived had betrayed him.

The final recorded hostage-transaction of Cnut's conquest represents a very different sort to those that preceded it. Edmund—now king after



Æthelred's death—and Cnut fought their decisive battle at Ashingdon, where the English suffered devastating losses: 'There Cnut had the victory and won for himself all the English people . . . and all the nobility of England were there destroyed.'<sup>65</sup> Despite an apparently comprehensive victory, Cnut and Edmund arranged a meeting at Alney, exchanging hostages. The kings' secured their new relationship with pledge and oath, although Edmund's death shortly after allowed Cnut to assume full kingship over the English.<sup>66</sup> The exchange of hostages secured safe passage for the parties attending the meeting, although they may also have secured a more long-term arrangement, cementing the new relationship between the two kings. This, certainly, is the impression given by the *Encomiast*, who presents the exchange in terms of a new alliance forged between Edmund and Cnut.<sup>67</sup>

No source records any further Anglo-Saxon hostage-donations until the accession of Edward the Confessor. Evidence from Scandinavia, however, suggests that Cnut remained keenly aware of the value of hostages. After Swein defeated the Norwegian king Olaf Trygvason in 1000, the Danish royal house had exerted hegemonic control over the Norwegians through the native earls Erik and Swein of Hlathir.<sup>68</sup> In 1016 this balance was upset: Olaf Haraldsson took control of the kingdom, killing Swein of Hlathir and forcing his brother from Norway.<sup>69</sup> Ten years later, Olaf joined forces with the Swedish king Anund Jakob and the pair attacked Cnut, in a battle by a site known as 'The Holy River.'<sup>70</sup> By 1028, no longer willing to tolerate Olaf's independent rule, Cnut moved against Olaf Haraldsson to reconquer Norway.<sup>71</sup>

Deserted by his men, the exiled King Olaf fled first to Sweden and then Russia, while Cnut placed Norway under the authority of his nephew Hákon, son of the late Earl Erik of Hlathir.<sup>72</sup> According to the twelfth-century historian Theodoricus Monachus, Cnut ensured the continuing loyalty of the Norwegians by extracting hostages from members of the Norwegian elite: 'and after he had taken hostages from those he thought less trustworthy, he returned to England.'<sup>73</sup> The vernacular history known as *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, written by an author working shortly after Theodoricus, preserves a similar record: 'Cnut first set his nephew Hákon over the kingdom and secured the country by taking hostage the sons of the most important men, and he oppressed the people and made them do him homage.'<sup>74</sup> Both Theodoricus and the *Ágrip* author present the practice of hostage-giving in similar terms: Cnut received the sons of the Norwegian noblemen to secure their fathers' submission to his cause and ensure their continued loyalty, much as Swein had from the English in 1013. A conquered elite of this kind required Cnut to use long-term strategies to first subdue and then win over the population. In this case, Cnut needed to control them from afar. The hostages' value as a means of coercion is bolstered by the *Ágrip* author's account, who explains that the Norwegians dared not rise against Cnut after his departure because they feared that Cnut would harm their sons: 'And even though such evil and oppression lay on the country, men dared not rise up for the sake of their sons who were held hostage.'<sup>75</sup>

Olaf Haraldsson returned in 1030 and attempted to oust the Danish dynasty, yet the Norwegian magnates remained loyal to Cnut. Olaf died at the Battle of Stiklestad and was shortly after venerated as a martyr.<sup>76</sup> The *Ágrip* author claims that while Norwegian resistance to Olaf was *ostensibly* motivated by a desire to prove their loyalty to Cnut, and thus secure the release of their sons, in reality their hostility stemmed from opposition to Olaf's proselytization of Norway: 'Kálfr of Egg . . . gained the support of many men, mostly those who wished to keep Óláfr's Christian preaching from the country . . . But Kálfr gave as his pretext that the sons of good men should not be held hostage.'<sup>77</sup> Kálfr's motivations may have been wicked, but he presented them to his countrymen in a manner that appealed to their sensibilities: to secure the freedom of their sons, the Norwegians had to demonstrate their loyalty to Cnut. Although the twelfth-century date of *Ágrip* and Theodoricus' *Historia Norvegiae* means their accounts of Cnut's activities in Norway must be approached with caution, the works may preserve valuable evidence for hostage-giving in eleventh-century Scandinavia.

Hostages represented an important component of all phases of the Danish conquest of England, functioning as an effective means to subdue many amongst the Anglo-Saxon elite without conflict and to retain their loyalty. The mutilation of a group of these hostages by Cnut, however, demonstrates the fragility of the practice of hostage-giving and the very real consequences when agreements ended in failure. That such violence took place was not a foregone conclusion, and a survey of the written corpus reveals that the execution or mutilation of hostages occurred only rarely in the early Middle Ages, making the 1014 incident exceptional. The visually shocking and degrading mutilation of the hostages conveyed a calculated message to the Anglo-Saxon elite who had deserted the Danish cause and was perhaps intended to encourage their ready submission on his return in 1015. In 1015–16 Cnut demanded hostages as markers of submission as his father had done, testament to the practice's perceived efficacy despite the events of 1014. This conclusion is supported by the presence of hostages in later accounts of Cnut's conquest of Norway, where hostages functioned as a useful means of controlling the native elite.

## Notes

- 1 ASC 1013 CDE: 'Toforan þam monðe Augustus com Swegen cyning mid his flotan to Sandwic,' Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A Collaborative Edition. Vol. 5, MS. C: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2001), 97 [hereafter O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC]; trans. ASC, 92. Although the campaign is also covered by the anonymous author of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, the account focuses almost exclusively on Swein's preparations for battle and says little about the conquest itself: Alistair Campbell, introduction to *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, Publications of the Royal Historical Society 72, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), cxxxiv [hereafter *Encomium*].
- 2 *eal þeodscype*, O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC, 98; trans. ASC, 93.
- 3 *se micla flota*, O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC, 91; trans. my own.



- 4 Although viking raids on Britain resumed in the 980s, there is little indication that these early attacks proved debilitating to Æthelred's government. Simon Keynes draws a distinction between different 'phases' of the viking raids of Æthelred's reign: 'Re-reading King Æthelred the Unready,' in *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. David Bates, Julia Crick and Sarah Hamilton (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 80–1. On contemporary perspectives on the viking attacks of the early eleventh century, see Simon D. Keynes, 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the viking Raids of 1006 and 1009–12,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 (2007): 151–220.
- 5 In 991, 994 and 1003–4. On Swein's early career see Peter H. Sawyer, 'Swein Forkbeard and the Historians,' in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, eds. Ian N. Wood and Graham A. Loud (London: Hambledon, 1991), 40.
- 6 The annal for 1013 is one in a series of entries spanning the years 983–1016, written after Cnut's conquest of England in 1016 by a single author. The chronicler composed his work after the Danish conquest in a single phase between 1016 and 1023, using a now-lost textual source and perhaps his own records. See Simon D. Keynes, 'The Declining Reputation of King Æthelred the Unready,' in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. D. Hill, British Archaeological Reports, British Series 59 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 1978), 228–38.
- 7 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1013: 'ƿa sona beah Uhtred eorl ealle Norðhymbre to him eal ƿæt folc on Lindesige 7 siððan ƿæt folc in Fifburhingum raðe ƿæs eall here be norðan Wæclinga stræte, him man sealde gislas of ælcere scire,' 97–98; trans. ASC, 92–3.
- 8 See Frank M. Stenton, 'The Danes in England,' The Raleigh Lecture on History, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 13 (1927): 242; Ian Howard, *Swein Forkbeard's Invasions and the Danish Conquest of England, 991–1017* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 106–7; Nils Lund, 'King Edgar and the Danelaw,' *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 9 (1976): 189 and 193–4; Clare Downham, *Viking Kings of Britain and Ireland: The Dynasty of Ivarr to A.D. 1014* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2007), 132.
- 9 Stenton, 'Danes,' 203–46; Henry Loyn, *The Vikings in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 113; Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1970), 89–93 and 191–2; Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Dealings of the Kings of England with Northumbria in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries,' in *The Anglo Saxons. Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickens*, ed. Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959), 87; Simon D. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready', 978–1016: A Study in Their Use as Historical Evidence*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 222; Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 66; Matthew Innes, 'Danelaw Identities: Ethnicity, Regionalism and Political Allegiance,' in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards, *Studies in the Early Middle Ages* 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 77.
- 10 Innes, 'Danelaw,' 66–7 and 72–4; Stafford, *Unification*, 65–68; Dawn M. Hadley, 'Viking and Native: Rethinking Identity and the Danelaw,' *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 50–1.
- 11 On Ælfifu, see Timothy Bolton, 'Ælfifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's Other Woman,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 51 (2007); Miles W. Campbell, 'Queen Emma and Ælfifu of Northampton: Canute the Great's Women,' *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 4 (1971): 69–70. While Nicholas Higham suggests this alliance was arranged in advance of Swein's arrival, this inference has received

- little support: *The Death of Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 58. The will of Æthelric of Bocking, dated 995x999, suggests that Swein may have arranged an alliance with Æthelric some twenty years earlier: *EHD* vol. 1, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn. (London: Eyre and Methuen, 1979), 121.
- 12 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1006, 90. For records of episodes in Welsh chronicles see Elizabeth Boyle, 'A Welsh Record of an Anglo-Saxon Political Mutilation,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 35 (2006), 245–9.
  - 13 Ælfifu's uncle Godwine (d. 1016) held the earldom of Lindsey, while Sigeferth, married to Ælfifu's cousin (d. 1015), and Morcar (d. 1015) served as chief thegns of the Seven Boroughs: O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1015–1016 CDE, 99–103; Simon D. Keynes, *Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c. 670–1066* (Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 1991), LXII–LXIII.
  - 14 On the 'palace revolution' of 1006 and the rise of Eadric Streona at the expense of this family, see Simon D. Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings: Alfred and Æthelred the Unready,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5th series, 36 (1986): 212–17; Keynes, *Diplomas*, 209–13; Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXIII.
  - 15 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1014, 99.
  - 16 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1013: *þa sona*, 97; trans. ASC, 92.
  - 17 Although in the ninth century the term *here* generally referred to a Scandinavian raiding army, by the eleventh century the term could also mean Danish settlers. While in this instance *here* suggests the Scandinavians inhabitants of northern England, it is unclear whether the chronicler referred ninth-century settlers or more recent arrivals. Ryan Lavelle suggests that the term is a conscious choice, used to conflate the Danish invading army and the Danish settlers: 'The Use and Abuse of Hostages in Later Anglo-Saxon England,' *Early Medieval Europe* 14 (2006): 281.
  - 18 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1013: '7 syððan he com ofer Wæclinga stræte, worhton þæt mæste yfel þæt ænig here don mihte,' 97; trans. ASC, 92.
  - 19 Edward A. Freeman, *A History of the Norman Conquest: Its Causes and Results*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1867–1879), I.395; Sawyer, 'Swein,' 31.
  - 20 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1013, 98; trans. ASC, 93.
  - 21 The chronicler uniquely rationalises the hostage-donation made by the inhabitants of London: 'And after that the citizens of London submitted and gave hostages, for they were afraid that he would destroy them.' ('seo buruhwaru æfter ðam on Lundene beah 7 gislude, forðon hi ondredon þæt he hi fordon wolde,') O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC, 98; trans. ASC, 92–93. For the argument that the chronicler resided in London, see Keynes, 'Declining,' 228–236.
  - 22 Æthelmær had been ealdorman of the south-west until 1005, when he stopped attesting charters. His participation in the submission indicates his continued political importance. See Keynes, *Atlas*, Table LXII; Keynes, *Diplomas*, 209–10; Higham, *Death of Anglo-Saxon England*, 59.
  - 23 Lavelle, 'Hostages,' 181.
  - 24 It is possible that one of the hostages is mentioned in a dispute recorded in *Hemming's Cartulary*. See below, XXX n. XXX.
  - 25 Malmesbury, I.370.
  - 26 See Lene Demidoff, 'The Death of Sven Forkbeard—in Reality and Later Tradition,' *Mediaeval Scandinavia* 11 (1982): 30–47.
  - 27 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1014: 'æfre ælcne deniscne cyng utlah of Engla lande gecwædon,' 98; trans. ASC, 93.
  - 28 Ibid.
  - 29 Nicole Marafioti has drawn attention to three potentially connected events that took place shortly before Æthelred's return: Swein's death on 3 February, the consecration of Ælfwig, newly ordained bishop of London, at York on 16 February, and Cnut's designation as king by the Danish fleet, arguing that 'the timing

- of these events suggest that [they were] all part of a single ceremonial gathering . . . a series of ritual events that were choreographed to confirm [Swein's] and Cnut's status as kings of England': *The King's Body: Burial and Succession in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 201.
- 30 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1014: 'sloh eal þæt mancynn þæt man ræcan mihte,' 99; trans. ASC, 93.
  - 31 Lavelle, 'Hostages,' 294.
  - 32 *Encomium* II.1, 14. The anonymous author indicates that Swein faced considerable opposition: 'Nouerat enim, quia pro inuasionem regni illis exosus erat populus' ('he knew that he was hateful to those people [the English], owing to the invasion of the kingdom'): *Encomium* I.5, 14–5.
  - 33 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1014: '7 wende þa suðweard oþ he com to Sandwic 7 let don up þær ða gislas þe his fæder gesælde wæron 7 cearf of hiora handa 7 earan 7 nosa,' 99; trans. ASC, 93.
  - 34 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1014: 'buton eallum þissum yfelum,' 99; trans. ASC, 93.
  - 35 'humano et diuino iure contempto . . . sic in insontes grassatus,' Malmesbury, I.310–311.
  - 36 Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis*, ed. William H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of St. Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 36–7; *Annales Fuldenses* 882, ed. Friedrich Kurze, MGH SRG 7 (Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1891), 102; *Annals of the Four Masters 1048–1049*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters*, 3 vols. (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1848), II.855–857. A further instance of mutilation occurred shortly after the Norman Conquest in 1068, when King William blinded an English hostage outside the walls of Exeter as punishment for the citizens' perceived recalcitrance: Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968–80), II.210–215.
  - 37 Kosto, 12–15, 39–44, 49–52; Joel Allen, *Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 53–7, discusses harm in the Roman Empire. Thietmar of Merseburg records an execution of hostages by Cnut in 1016; his account is extremely confused, and it seems that he conflated Cnut's attack of 1014 with his conquest two years later: Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon* VII.40, ed. Robert Holtzmann, *Thietmar Merseburgensis Episcopi Chronicon*, MGH SRG NS 9 (Hanover: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1935), 158 (hereafter *Chronicon*).
  - 38 Flodoard, *Annales* 960, ed. Philippe Lauer, *Les annales de Flodoard*, Collection de textes pour servir à l'étude et à l'enseignement de l'histoire 39 (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1905), 148. Cf. Richer of Saint-Rémi's account of the episode: *Historia* III.13, ed. and trans. Justin Lake, *Histories: Richer of Saint Rémi*, 2 vols., *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), II.16–9.
  - 39 David A. Warner, *Ottoman Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg*, Manchester Medieval Sources Series (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 1–64; David S. Bachrach, 'Memory, Epistemology, and the Writing of Early Medieval Military History: the Example of Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg (1009–1018),' *Viator* 38 (2007).
  - 40 *Chronicon* IV.24: 'Veni et cum laicali habitu, quo apud piratas debui obses conversari, prioribus adhuc indutus vestimentis, V. feria profectus sum,' 158; trans. Warner, 169.
  - 41 *Chronicon* IV.24: 'Tali furore omnes succensi . . . clericum et nepotem meum cum caeteris obsidibus universis naribus ac auribus et manibus obruncant, foris eos prociuentes in portum. Tunc fugientibus his unusquisque a suis rapitur, merore inaudito insurgente,' 160–1; trans. my own.

- 42 Blinding was the most commonly recorded mutilation across early medieval Western Europe. See Geneviève Bührer-Thierry, '“Just Anger” or “Vengeful Anger”? The Punishment of Blinding in the Early Medieval West,' in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, CA: Cornell University Press, 1998), 75–91; Catherine Holmes, 'Basil II the Bulgar Slayer and the Blinding of 15,000 Bulgarians in 1014: Mutilation and Prisoners of War in the Middle Ages,' in *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 85–98; Klaus van Eickels, 'Gendered Violence: Castration and Blinding as Punishment for Treason in Normandy and Anglo-Norman England,' in *Violence, Vulnerability and Embodiment: Gender and History*, ed. Shani D'Cruze and Anupama Rao (Malden: Blackwell Press, 2005), 94–109.
- 43 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 994, 87; *Brut y Tywysogyon* 995, ed. Thomas Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon, Red Book of Hergest Version*, History and Law Series 16 (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955), 9; *Annales Cambriae* B 987 (= 995), ed. John Williams ab Ithel, Rolls Series (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860), 20.
- 44 *Chronicon*, VIII.36–37 and 39–40.
- 45 Sawyer, 'Swein,' 34; Nils Lund, 'The Danish Perspective,' in *The Battle of Maldon, AD 991*, ed. Donald Scragg (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 138; Ann Williams, *Ethelred the Unready: the Ill-Counselled King* (London: Hambledon and London, 2003), 117.
- 46 For instance *Wihfred* 15, 22–23, and 26–28, ed. Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903–16), I.13–14.
- 47 Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998): 215–6; Simon D. Keynes, 'Crime and Punishment in the Reign of King Æthelred the Unready,' in *People and Places in Northern Europe 500–1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. Ian N. Wood and Nils Lund (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1991), 72–3; Keynes, 'A Tale of Two Kings,' 212.
- 48 See, for instance, Lantfred, *Translatio et Miracula S. Swithuni*, ch. 26, ed. and trans. Michael Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun*, Winchester Studies 4.ii (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003) 310 and 312; *II Cnut* 30–30.1, I.332 and 334; *V Æthelred* 3–3.1; *II Cnut* 2.1 and 30–30.5, ed. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze*, I.238, 332, and 334; O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body,' 217 and 225–226; Keynes, 'Crime and Punishment,' 72–3.
- 49 *Hemingi Chartularium ecclesiae Wigorniensis*, ed. Thomas Hearne (Oxford, Sheldonian Theatre, 1723), I.259–60.
- 50 Wulfstan Cantor, *Narratio Metrica de S. Swithuno* II.457–9: 'Exploratores siluarum densa peragrant, predonesque locis inuestigantur opacis, et membris caesi prebent spectacula plebe. Perculerat terrorque animos formidine cunctos,' ed. and trans. Lapidge, *Swithun*, 515–518.
- 51 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC C 1036; *Encomium* II.16, III.4, and III.6; John of Worcester, *Chronicon* 1036, ed. and trans. Reginald R. Darlington, Patrick McGurk and Jennifer Bray, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 2 vols., Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); William of Jumieges, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* VII.6, ed. Elizabeth M. C. van Houts, 2 vols., Oxford Medieval Texts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992–1995). See Susanne Kries, 'English-Danish Rivalry and the Mutilation of Alfred in the Eleventh-Century Chronicle Poem *The Death of Alfred*,' *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104 (2005): 42–53; O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body,' 212–215.
- 52 O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body,' 230.
- 53 The purported involvement of Earl Godwine in Alfred's mutilation is, in the *Vita Edwardi regis*, cited as a reason for King Edward the Confessor's resentment of the Godwine family and his preference for Frankish and Norman followers:

- Vita Edwardi Regis* I.3, ed. Frank Barlow, *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster, Attributed to a Monk at Saint-Bertin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- 54 See Lavelle's comment that the execution of the hostages 'may, paradoxically, have been an alternative of far less moment', 'Hostages,' 294.
- 55 Forensic punishments were enacted more readily against the lower ranks of society: O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body,' 215.
- 56 *insontes; magnae nobilitatis et elegantiae pueros*, Malmesbury, I.310–311.
- 57 Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 374.
- 58 Holmes, 'Basil II,' 87.
- 59 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1015–1016, 99–103.
- 60 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1015: 'se ealdorman beswican þone ætheling,' 100; trans. ASC, 94.
- 61 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1015: 'Westsexe bugon 7 gislodon 7 horsodon þone here,' 100; trans. ASC, 94.
- 62 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1016: '7 beah ða for nyde 7 ealle Norðhymbro mid him, 7 he gislode, 7 hine mon ðeah hwæpere ofsloh ðuruh Eadrices ræd caldormannes, 7 Purcyltel Nafenan sunu mid him,' 101; trans. ASC, 95.
- 63 Archibald Duncan has suggested that the annal should consequently be interpreted as a non-linear narrative, with mention of Uhtred and Thurcetel's death inserted into the annal to connect it with Uhtred's submission: 'The Battle of Carham, 1018,' *Scottish Historical Review* 55 (1976): 20–8.
- 64 Although Thurcetel's identity is unknown, Nafena attended a grand council with other Northumbrian thegns in the late tenth century: Whitelock, 'Dealings,' 82.
- 65 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1016: 'Ðær ahte Cnut sige 7 gefeht him ealle Engla þeode . . . 7 eal Angelcynnes duguð þar wearð fordon,' 103; trans. ASC, 96.
- 66 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1016, 103; trans. ASC, 96.
- 67 *Encomium*, II.13, 28–30.
- 68 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Archiepiscoporum Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae*, II.40 (= 38), ed. Bernhard Schmeidler, *Adam von Bremen, Hamburgische Kirchengeschichte*, 3rd edn., MGH SRG 2 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1917). On Svold see Sverre Bagge, 'Eleventh-Century Norway: The Formation of a Kingdom,' in *The Neighbours of Poland in the Eleventh Century*, ed. Premyslaw Urbańczyk (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, 2002), 33–5; Nils Hallan, 'Tradisjonen om Svolder,' in *Festskrift til Alfred Jakobsen*, eds. Jan R. Hagland, Jan T. Faarlund and Jaarle Rønhovd (Trondheim: Tapir, 1987).
- 69 For Olaf's career see Claus Krag, 'Norway at the Threshold of Western Europe,' in *Europe Around the Year 1000*, ed. Premyslaw Urbańczyk (Warsaw: Polish Academy of Sciences, 2001), 343–50.
- 70 ASC E 1026, ed. Susan Irvine, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A Collaborative Edition. Vol. 7, MS. E: A Semi-Diplomatic Edition* (Brewer: Woodbridge, 2004). On the character of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* during the reign of Cnut, see Michael K. Lawson, *Cnut: the Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century*, The Medieval World (London: Longman, 1993), 49–54. Matthew Townend discusses the dating of the battle and analysis of the skaldic poetry mentioning the conflict: 'Contextualising the Knútsdrápur: Skaldic Praise-Poetry at the Court of Cnut,' *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001): 145–79, 149–51, and 159–65.
- 71 O'Brien O'Keeffe ASC 1028. The fullest account is in ASC E, s.a., ed. Irvine; Hallvaðr háreksblei, *Knútsdrápur*, stanza 6, ed. Finnur Jónsson, *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, B: *Rettet tekst med tolkning* (Copenhagen: Gylendanske, 1915), 294; Þórarinn loftunga, *Tøgdrápa*, stanza 7, ed. Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, 299.
- 72 Lawson, *Cnut*, 9–48; Peter H. Sawyer, 'Cnut's Scandinavian Empire,' in *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*, ed. Alexander Rumble,



Studies in the Early History of Britain (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), 10–22.

- 73 Theodoricus Monachus, *Historia de antiquitate regum Norwagensium*, ch. 16: ‘acceptisque obsidibus ab illis, quibus minus credendum putaret, reversus est in Angliam,’ ed. Gustav Storm, *Monumenta Historica Norvegiae* (Copenhagen: A. W. Brøgger, 1880), 31; *An Account of the Ancient History of the Norwegian Kings*, trans. David McDougall and Ian McDougall, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series 11 (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998), 23.
- 74 Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum, ch. 27: ‘En Knútr skipar þá í ríki first Hqkoni systursyni sínum, ok gíslaði land undir sik af allra baztra manna sunum, en lagði fólkíð til áþjánar ok til hlýðskildis,’ ed. and trans. Matthew J. Driscoll, *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series 10 (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1995), 40–1.
- 75 Ágrip, ch. 30: ‘En Þó at sjá nauð ok illing lægi á landi, þá treytusk menn eigi uppreist at veita fyrir suna sinna sakar er í gosling vqru,’ 42–3.
- 76 O’Brien O’Keeffe ASC 1030, 105. On traditions surrounding Olaf’s death, see Sverre Bagge, ‘Warrior, King and Saint: The Medieval Histories about Oláfr Haraldsson,’ *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 109 (2010): 281–321.
- 77 Ágrip, ch. 31: ‘Eggjar-Kálfr . . . ok fekk með sér fjölmenni, allra helzt fyr þess sakar at kristniboð hans [Óláfs] kæmi eigi á landit . . . ok fekk þó þat til orðs at góðra manna synir skyldu eigi fyrir gisl [. . .] vera,’ 42–3.

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## 5 Warrior Narratives and Hostageship Ethos

### Old French Literature and “Reality” in the Twelfth Century

*Matthew Bennett*

The purpose of this study is to consider hostageship as an aspect of the *mentalité* of the knightly class in the High Middle Ages. This requires an interdisciplinary approach combining texts which have previously been allocated to the fields of history or literature. The modern distinction between genres is unhelpful and indeed unsuitable for the chivalric-influenced materials of the twelfth century. This is the justification for drawing upon texts which may differ substantially in apparent form and function and range over a century-and-a-half (the ‘long’ twelfth century?) in their creation. Thus annals, chronicles, epic poems, biographies and histories, both general and specific to events (such as a particular crusade), in Latin and the vernaculars of northwestern Europe, are all grist to the mill. Although the attitudes and actions portrayed in these sources may appear to be at odds with the way hostage-taking is perceived today, this helps a modern audience to understand how the past is both different, but can influence our current understanding. For example, the annual State Opening of Parliament by Queen Elizabeth II reveals just how much medieval ceremony and imagery there still is in this occasion. On entering Parliament one member of the Lower House is taken as hostage for her safe-conduct, a custom that goes back to the time of King Charles I, who had a notoriously troubled relationship with Parliament ending with him losing his head. Nowadays the hostage is not at any risk of repercussions but is, nevertheless, kept under guard until the Sovereign has safely left the building.<sup>1</sup> This seemingly quaint relic of latter days is helpful in understanding hostageship, for today hostage-taking is always seen as an illegal and prejudicial act.

Yet, as Adam J. Kosto has explained in his recent study *Hostages in the Middle Ages*, hostageship was both a ‘legitimate institution’ and an essential part of ‘crucial aspects of political and economic life’ during that era.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, it was part of the mindset and culture of the High Middle Ages, upon which this paper will focus. An important theme, which emerges from the analysis of hostageship in a military context, is that much seems to depend upon the type of war being waged as how captives of any kind are treated. Sometimes they may be mutilated or hanged, yet at other times they are ransomed or set free. This does not seem to be entirely due to the

whim of the victorious party, although this may be a factor, as there are clearly rules of war and legal obligations to be observed depending upon the situation in which the contending parties find themselves. Also, the rules of hostage exchange are understood not just within the boundaries of Latin Christendom, in which the studied texts were generated, but across confessional boundaries into the Muslim world.

At this point it would be usual to tell the tale of William Marshal, only five years old, held as a hostage by King Stephen for the surrender of a rebel-held castle at Newbury, towards the end of The Anarchy. Faced with the possible execution of his (fourth) son, John Marshal apparently replied that he had 'the hammer and anvil' to make another. William is then threatened with three gruesome forms of killing: hanging, hurled by a catapult, or squashed against the walls; but in his innocence the child understands them to be a game, so that Stephen relents and his life is spared.<sup>3</sup> This story begins all the biographies of the Marshal and also Adam Kostov's book.<sup>4</sup> The problem is that I do not believe it. The assumption is that William recalled the story in later life, but it reads like a poetic formula in which the hero suffers three-fold threats and either defeats or escapes them. This matters, because taking the events described at face value creates a severely distorted view of what might be called 'hostage management' in this case to urge the surrender of a fortification. In fact, such behaviour, although not entirely implausible, was not common, and in the case of a young child, unparalleled. Using this romanticised case study to attempt to represent reality is therefore pointless. We must look elsewhere for credible evidence of how hostageship worked.

*The Song of Roland* is generally considered to be the oldest of the *chansons de geste* and its very first scene deals with the role of hostages.<sup>5</sup> The Emperor Charlemagne is represented as having conquered all of Spain except for the impregnable fortress of Saragossa. Here he is still defied by pagan King Marsile, whose noblest advisor, Blancandrin, counsels that Charles should be offered everything, even submission to his lordship and conversion to the Christian faith, to ensure that he withdraws his army from Saracen soil. Also, 'to guarantee our word' ten or twenty legitimate sons of the nobility whose lives will be at risk if they fail to fulfil the terms of the agreement.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, they must expect decapitation when the pagans break their word, as they surely will. Blancandrin even offers up his son as part of the deal. When Roland engineers the risky task of sending his stepfather Ganelon as messenger to Marsile, he unwittingly starts a feud. Ganelon turns traitor and plots the Saracen ambush which leads to the death of Roland and the rest of the Twelve Peers in the pass of Roncesvals.

Interestingly, no more is heard of these Saracen hostages, who form part of the tribute by which Marsile feigns to win peace with Charlemagne. The high-born individuals who guarantee a negotiation between two kings are not harmed, it seems. Indeed, after Charlemagne's victory and his capture of Saragossa, '100,000' pagans are converted, notably Queen Bramimonde.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast, following the duel in which Ganelon's champion is defeated, so proving his treachery, the thirty kinsmen who stood surety for him are all hanged.<sup>8</sup> Obviously, one does not have to seek consistency in poetic source, the product of many authors and versions, but there may be a reason for the distinction. In Ganelon's case, he was a convicted *felun*, who had deliberately connived to betray and harm his lord. The Saracens with whom he plotted are also by nature *felun* and had previously executed two of Charles's ambassadors.<sup>9</sup> But their hostages seem to escape the penalty meted out to the Christians, perhaps because their souls can be won for the faith, an important aspect of the crusade era epics.

Orderic Vitalis, a monk of the central Normandy abbey of Saint-Evroult, was writing his *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 1114–41) contemporaneously with the Latin conquest of the Holy Land and the creation of the *Roland*. Despite its title, his work, which begins as a universal history, soon becomes a fascinating and detailed history of his times.<sup>10</sup> Nor was Orderic restricted to clerical, Latin accounts as the basis for his chronicle. For example, there is the story of the great Norman conqueror, Bohemond, who in 1100, when duke of Antioch fell into the hands of a Muslim ruler, 'Dalimann.'<sup>11</sup> History then turns to Romance when Melaz, the beautiful daughter of Dalimann, falls in love with Bohemond as a proponent of Frankish chivalry and works for his release. In a long episode which reads just like a vernacular *chanson de geste*, indeed it closely parallels *La Prise d'Orange*, the hero and his companions fight their way to freedom.<sup>12</sup> In reality, Antioch paid a ransom for the return of its lord, and the deal was eased by the release of the daughter of Yaghi-Siyan, the former Turkish ruler of the city in a prisoner exchange. Although nothing is stated, it is clear that she was a hostage for good behaviour on her father's behalf. Like Orable of legend, it is alleged that Melaz and her household converted to Christianity, and that she then married Roger of Salerno, later the ruler of Antioch with Bohemond acting as steward (*dapifer*) at the wedding feast.<sup>13</sup>

Orderic also presents more historically-based examples of hostageship, especially in the context of the Norman Conquest. Following William, duke of Normandy's victory at the battle of Hastings in October 1066, 'the men of Kent came flocking to him just outside Dover, to swear fealty and give hostages.'<sup>14</sup> Later, as William advanced on London, 'The Londoners also took the wise course and surrendered to the duke, bringing him all the hostages he named and required.'<sup>15</sup> Following his coronation on Christmas Day, King William returned to his duchy in March 1067 for a royal progress, during which he: 'displayed his wealth and honours, whilst keeping with him virtually as hostages (*velut obsides*) those men whose authority and safety counted for most with their kinsmen and fellow countrymen.' Why Orderic feels it necessary to qualify 'hostages' is uncertain, as the rest of the sentence makes it clear that it is exactly what his captives were.<sup>16</sup>

Following a revolt against his rule by the city of Exeter, in January 1068, its citizens fortified their walls against the king. Advancing in the depths of

winter, at considerable risk to his army's health, William was outraged that they refused to swear fealty, offering only tribute. Faced with the threat of attack, the Exonians tried to placate him and: 'begged for peace, offered to open their gates to him, and brought him all the hostages he demanded.'<sup>17</sup> (This formula reoccurs in many different sources and genres.) However, terrified by the thought of punishment for their former disloyalty, they still locked the gates and manned the walls. 'So by the king's command the whole army closed in on the city, and one of the hostages was blinded within site of the gates. But neither fear nor any pity for the remaining hostages could shake the resolution of the angry citizens,' and an eighteen-day siege resulted.<sup>18</sup> After William had negotiated surrender on terms, there is no mention of the hostages suffering, and indeed he set a guard to prevent the city being plundered by the common soldiers (*gregarii milites*).<sup>19</sup> Kosto, who describes these episodes in less detail, sees them as representing: 'The most common type of open ended agreement guaranteed by hostages . . . following military defeat.'<sup>20</sup> No further mention of their presence may then suggest that they were released once the conquest was accepted by all. It is interesting, though, that even in the most desperate circumstances the hostage-holder was reluctant to harm them, probably because William knew that he needed to be on good terms with his subjects in the future, and maltreatment would only result in resentment and feud across his kingdom.

Just how dangerous it was to abuse citizens of well-fortified towns is shown by the events at Alençon in 1118. They had rebelled against King Henry I of England because his nephew, Stephen, count of Mortain, oppressed the townsfolk unreasonably. Suspecting them of disloyalty, he burdened them with extra taxes, before requiring them to hand over their sons as hostages. He also seized the wife of a prominent citizen, throwing her into prison, where she was raped by the guards. Unsurprisingly, the outraged husband formed a sworn conspiracy to revenge this wrong. The citizens appealed to Fulk V, count of Anjou, to become their lord. Fulk readily agreed and led a strong force to Alençon, entering the town and besieging its castle. In response, Henry I brought a relief force to oppose the Angevins, but he was decisively defeated. With the aid of the citizens' knowledge of the pipes which provided the garrison's water supply, Fulk had it cut off by tunnelling and the castle fell. The loss of an important town and border fortress by the English Crown was so due to a total disregard of the law of hostages as understood at the time.<sup>21</sup>

To return to the Old French epic in a different form: those poems which make up the so-called Cycle of Rebellious Barons. One of most famous of these texts is *Raoul de Cambrai*, a product of the last quarter of the twelfth century, which deals with the problems of inheritance in feudal society under a weak and vacillating monarch.<sup>22</sup> The main hero, Raoul, is posthumous child of the lord of Cambrai, who loses his inheritance because King Louis insists on marrying his widowed mother to Gibouin of Le Mans. His action is perfectly consistent with royal authority, but stores up troubles for

the future when the fief will be violently contested. Raoul's uncle, Guerri the Red, count of Arras, threatens Louis that he will fight for his nephew's inheritance. Years pass, and aged fifteen, the normal age for dubbing, Raoul attends Louis's court seeking to be knighted. Some years later again, Raoul seeks to assert his rights to inherit his father's fief and threatens to attack his step-father in order to achieve this aim. In order to appease the firebrand, King Louis offers him the lands of the next baron of France who dies. This is the moment at which Raoul demands hostages as a guarantee of the king's promise. Louis weakly agrees to grant him forty of the highest born men of the land. The text names them in the following *laisses* (although they total only thirty), including the counts of Anjou, Maine and Troies, amongst other notables, specifying that Raoul had all the hostages he wished. At this point the poem's authorial voice comments that the king will 'break his word and bring many noble men to grief' (ll. 625–26) and that 'tuit li ostage enfurent en balance' (l. 627). The Kay edition translates the phrase as 'all the hostages hung in the balance,' but another translator makes the implicit threat even clearer: 'the lives of all the hostages [were] put in danger.'<sup>23</sup>

Just over a year later, Herbert, count of Vermandois, who holds lands in the same region as Cambrai, dies. Raoul promptly rides to Paris and demands of the king the inheritance he had been promised, recalling that: 'I saw you promise and swear it, and you had hostages given to me as surety.' (ll. 667–8). However, Louis reneges on his promise, for Herbert has left four strong sons and the king declares he will not 'vex four men on account of one.'<sup>24</sup> Mad with anger, Raoul rides to the royal palace, where many of the hostages are in attendance, and calls upon them to fulfil their oaths. He then threatens to do them harm within his tower, the donjon that was the symbol of his lordship. They are terrified of what this might mean, and seven names are cited, including Geoffrey of Anjou, Samson of Troies and a certain Bernart the white-haired. Geoffrey is terrified, saying: 'Friend, why do you frighten me so?' (l. 697) Raoul insists that Louis has failed him utterly as a lord. The hostage barons then plead for truce so that they may speak to Louis and receive his guarantee that they will be saved from 'this devil, the wickedest man who ever wore a hauberk.' (ll. 712–14). Count Geoffrey tries to persuade the king that he should stick to his word, insisting that the dishonour is Louis's and they are 'hostages to the agreement.' (l. 723) Weak as ever, Louis agrees to give Raoul his glove as pledge of handing over Herbert's lands, but, in the same breath, declares that neither he nor his vassals will act as guarantors of the grant.<sup>25</sup> The inevitable result is a long series of conflicts in which many noblemen die, even outlasting Raoul's own death, a product of his arrogance and eventual denial of God.

Louis represents the essence of bad kingship, interfering in the inheritances and marriages of his aristocracy, but lacking the will to enforce his authority in a mess of conflicting decisions. Just as in the *Roland*, the hostages appear as an important part of the negotiations, but they disappear once the narrative has moved on into the multiple battle scenes which make

up the stock content of the *chansons de geste*. What *Raoul* adds to the mix, though, is the fear expressed by the noble hostages that they might suffer injury at the hands of their righteously angry captor. If captor seems too strong a word, there can be no other, because they had all given their word, that they would hand themselves over and make themselves his prisoners, to do with as he wanted. In the thought-world of the late twelfth century a nobleman had to keep his word or lose his honour, whatever the risk to life or limb.<sup>26</sup>

The possible physical consequences of becoming a hostage appear in an important poem of around 1200, the *Chanson de Girart de Roussillon*, written in a language which combines dialects of northern French and Provençal. This is worth commenting on because there could be variations in customary law between the culture of the *langue d'oïl* of the Ile de Paris where the French king reigned, Norman or Insular French (the language of the Oxford Roland MS) and that of the Languedoc.<sup>27</sup> This poem exemplifies the issues concerning being taken captive in war and ransoming practices during civil war. Like *Raoul de Cambrai*, *Girart de Roussillon* is much concerned with the relationship between the king as lord and his vassals, for when the monarch fails in his responsibilities or deliberately offends against his loyal baron, then the vassal is entitled to declare defiance (*desfi*, *diffidatio*) against this breaking of the feudal contract.<sup>28</sup>

The ensuing civil war might be expected to result in a breakdown of legal niceties. Indeed, throughout the poem there are times when Girart orders devastation of his enemy's lands, the plundering of churches and the massacre of the menfolk.<sup>29</sup> Yet, on other occasions the laws of chivalry are observed. It is interesting that in the passages which use the word hostage (e.g., *ostagedor* l. 8646) the text makes it clear that prisoners are to be protected.<sup>30</sup> These are clearly associated with gaining ransoms: 'Such an opportunity for booty has arisen that will make the poorest rich!' (8474–75) and 'Be careful not to kill the prisoners because they are a precious means to end the war happily' (8482–83); also 'Tell them (knights and burghers) not to kill all the prisoners because rich prisoners make better conditions of peace' (8459–60).<sup>31</sup>

The implication from these passages is that it depended upon the type of war which was being fought as to whether hostages were taken as a guarantee for negotiations. Also, in *Girart de Roussillon*, at least, there was an association made with ransom and recovery of freedom. Prisoners were asked to swear their 'parole' (a word that has entered English in just such a context) and such agreements negated the requirement for hostages.<sup>32</sup> Girart appears in another rebellious baron poem as *Girart de Vienne*. In one episode Girart captures Count Lambert of Berry who has been opposed to him, but once defeated promises to serve him with numerous knights instead.<sup>33</sup> A crucial factor in this new relationship is that of *parage*, meaning equality of birth, in other words a perquisite of nobility. Lambert has lost much wealth as a result of his defeat, but Girart looks after him in his



household. One telling line is when Lambert asks: 'Why as your hostage do you wish to be so hospitable towards me' (l. 3795) in what is a pun on the Old French *ostages* and *ostagier*.<sup>34</sup> The implications of this question are clear: a hostage might expect the fate which Raoul threatens the guarantors with: imprisonment and possibly torture.

In contrast the expected outcome for captured non-noble fighters could be execution, or at the least, mutilation.<sup>35</sup> *Girart de Roussillon* provides vivid descriptions of their likely fate if captured in war. For example, in the scene when the wicked Burgundians take ordinary soldiers prisoner: 'there was no sergeant or crossbowman who did not need a false arm or wooden leg' (8855–57).<sup>36</sup> When the mutilated men arrive at Girart's court: 'Each one had a foot or a fist cut off or hair docked like an idiot or eyes torn out' (8923–27).<sup>37</sup> The devastation of war is described as extended to non-combatants as well, not just the hapless peasantry and townspeople, but also those specifically excluded from the threat of war by law and custom such as clerics, women, children, the elderly and frail, merchants and traders.

A glance at the index of Adam Kosto's book reveals that it contains the names of almost all the Kings of France, but a strange omission is that of Louis VI, the Fat. This is surprising because we possess a biographical history entitled *Gesta Ludovici* written by one of his closest confidantes, Suger, who was abbot of the royal abbey of St Denis for three decades until his death in 1151.<sup>38</sup> It is not fanciful to see this genre as related to the *chansons de geste*. Indeed it was said of Suger that '[he] could relate the deeds of any king or prince of the Franks [and that] he loved to stay up to the middle of the night telling the deeds of heroic men.'<sup>39</sup> The episodic nature of the text is indeed reminiscent of epic poetry as it recounts King Louis's attempts to assert his authority over a series of rebellious vassals and castellans. Just as in a *chanson de geste* there is a focus on exciting episodes of military activity, with all its colour, heroism and brutality. The reference to hostages occurs on the conclusion of a successful campaign of pacification. For example, when still Dauphin, Louis led a raid against the castle of Saint-Sever(-sur-Indre) and by his personal bravery terrified the garrison and brought its castellan to heel:

[For] they knew that the lord Louis and his men were very bold knights who would not see fit to withdraw until they had destroyed the castle down to its very foundations; and they would either fix its noble men to a gibbet or rip out their eyes. So, after some discussion, the lord of the castle promptly surrendered to his royal majesty and placed the fortress and his land under the king's authority. And on his return the lord Louis took the lord of the castle as a hostage and, leaving him behind at Etampes, came back home to Paris with a quick victory and a happy outcome.<sup>40</sup>

A final example from the *Gesta Ludovici* is Louis's conflict with the William X, duke of Aquitaine in 1126, over the unfinished castle of Montferrand

(near to Clermont) in the Auvergne. In a surprise attack the royal forces under the command of Almaric de Monfort captured some prisoners: 'When they begged that he allow them to be ransomed, he ordered that they each lose a hand; so maimed they were sent back to their companions in the tower, carrying their fists in their fists.'<sup>41</sup> Apart from this skirmish, royal and ducal forces were engaged in a stand-off, and what followed again reads very like a *chanson de geste*. Duke William protests that the culpable William VI, count of Auvergne, holds him and that he is prepared to do his duty as a loyal vassal and present the culprit in the royal court, and this arrangement to be secured by: 'a large and sufficient number of hostages'. Accordingly, 'The King took counsel with the leading men of the kingdom on these issues and, as justice dictated, accepted the duke's fealty, his sworn oath, and a sufficient number of hostages, so bringing peace and order back to the land and its churches.'<sup>42</sup>

King Louis's most persistent opponent was a man called Hugh de Puiset, and Suger was present at a meeting where Hugh promised not to fortify the castle at Le Puiset; but '[his] oath, sworn so recently it was like some liquid that had not set, was shown to be worthless.'<sup>43</sup> It took much fighting to enforce royal authority. On a later occasion, 'after he had been restored to the king's favour by the giving of many hostages and the swearing of countless oaths,' Hugh rebelled again and only ceased to be a problem when he left on Crusade.<sup>44</sup>

This study will conclude with a brief discussion of Crusade sources. As will have become apparent, I am in accord with Nancy Partner and others in considering that there is not as much difference in genre (as might be supposed) between a monastic chronicle and a jongleur's tale.<sup>45</sup> The classic example of this is Ambroise's poem of the Third Crusade, *la Estoire de Guerre Sainte*, compared to the Latin *Itinerarium*; scholars are nonplussed as to which text preceded or influenced the other.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, there was a debate about the antiquity of the vernacular sources for the First Crusade, notably the *Chanson d'Antioche*, although this had been settled in favour of the Latin texts. While they can be assigned dates close to events which they describe, it is now fairly clear that the *Chanson d'Antioche* as it exists today, dates from the last quarter of the twelfth century.<sup>47</sup> This poem contains an interesting episode concerning the nephew of Garsion, the Saracen 'king' who defended Antioch during its eight-month long siege (October 1097 to June 1098) and a Christian knight, Rainalt Porcet, who is captured during fighting around the bridge across the River Orontes. His character is based upon a real crusader who was captured and beheaded, being considered a martyr for refusing to apostasise.<sup>48</sup> The story comes from the contemporary account of Peter Tudebode, who adds to it the claim that pilgrims held prisoner in Antioch were brought out, stripped naked and then put to the torch.<sup>49</sup>

These grim stories of massacre contrast with the *Antioche's* story-line of the bold Rainalt who, imprisoned, refused to convert to the Saracen religion and worship its gods. Instead, Garsion instructs his doctors to heal the hero's wounds so that he might be exchanged for his nephew in the hands

of the crusaders.<sup>50</sup> Now, interwoven with this plan for civilised prisoner exchange is the grotesque tale of the Tafurs in the crusader host who cook and eat the Saracen dead!<sup>51</sup> Atrocity stories, often absurd, are the stock of war propaganda and often designed to fan the flames of hatred against an enemy, or, as in this case, to terrify them. Do they make descriptions of ransom and exchange more or less credible? Certainly, when Garsion offers a fifteen-day truce to Bohemond, this can be supported by reference to Robert the Monk's chronicle.<sup>52</sup> The Saracen leader then attempts to exchange Rainalt for his nephew the 'emir of Persia.' Unfortunately for this plan, Garsion learns that his nephew is actually mortally wounded and has no prospect of recovery. This discovery, combined with the accusation that the Christians have broken the truce, so angers him that he orders Rainalt to be stripped and brutally tortured. This behaviour allows the poet to sermonise about the Christ-like suffering of the crusader in contrast to the pagan Saracens and their false gods.<sup>53</sup> On the point of death, Rainalt is strapped to horse and released, but before he dies is able to cry out to Bohemond not to pay a penny for the exchange.<sup>54</sup> Despite the fantasised setting of the episode, it does illustrate that, no matter how brutal warfare was, it was possible for the poem's audience to conceive of chivalric behaviour, even across cultural and religious boundaries.

The Occitan fragment known as the *Canso d'Antiocha* preceded the production of the *Antioche* by a generation, possibly being written before the Second Crusade, but obeys the conventions of the *chansons de geste* in much the same way.<sup>55</sup> It contains specific references to the use of hostages to guarantee an agreement (*covenensa*) that instead of a mass battle between Crusaders and Saracens, there should be a duel of thirty chosen warriors from each side: 'This will be well guaranteed with hostages in an agreement such that those who succeed in gaining victory will retain the city, and all the other land will be in their power, from Nicaea the Great as far as the Valley of Josafat.' (ll.237–40)

Four guarantors are named and thirty emirs provide additional bail (the same number as Ganelon's kinsmen on the *Roland*), with the assurance that they will be 'well secured against most of the liability' (ll. 241–44). What is interesting in the passage is its use of legal terms to characterise the conflict, the crusader protagonist, Robert the Frenchman, replying that 'in our kingdom it is not the custom to make an agreement after the battle lines have been drawn up' (ll. 245–47). Accordingly, the crusaders will seize everything that the enemy have brought with them by 'right of usufruct' (ll. 248–49).<sup>56</sup> Although presented here in an imaginative and literary context, such ideas were indeed part of the reality of war in the minds of its knightly participants.

An episode from the *chanson de geste* *Le Couronnement de Louis* echoes this aspect of arranging a duel, on this occasion between William Strong-arm (representing his lord the child-king Louis) and Guy of Germany, with the city of Rome as the prize.<sup>57</sup> William demands as many hostages as he desires, with Guy taking the same, according to the agreement (*convenant*).<sup>58</sup>

Willingness to engage in such a duel was signified by the intended participant presenting his gauntlet, which William alone of the French was brave enough to do.<sup>59</sup> Of course, the hero kills his opponent and chucks his lifeless body into the River Tiber, enabling Louis to be crowned emperor. The hostages do not reappear in the poem, but their presence in the narrative demonstrates that their involvement was to be expected in confrontations of this nature.

In conclusion, the offering and taking of hostages was common practice during warfare in the twelfth century, both between Christian opponents and those outside Christendom (even imagined as fantasy Saracens). Although descriptions of this activity in a range of literary sources do not prove that this was always done in the way they are portrayed, they are very suggestive in establishing the mind-world of the chivalric elite and how its members sought to regulate their relationships within conflict. Michael Köhler's recently published work on treaty and alliances between the crusader states and Muslim cities and rulers does much to raise awareness of such behaviours in historical reality.<sup>60</sup> For example, outside Antioch on the First Crusade: 'According to the *jus gentium*, the "law of nations," the heathen Kirbogha is a valid partner in negotiations and potentially a treaty.' Eyewitness accounts which informed Albert of Aachen describe 'mutual oath-taking and exchange of hostages were to safeguard (knightly duels)' outside the city.<sup>61</sup> The same author gives an account of an agreement between Godfrey de Bouillon and the Fatimid coastal town of Arsuf which concluded a peace treaty secured by a payment of tribute by the Muslims and an exchange of hostages.<sup>62</sup> Two decades later, it was even possible for King Baldwin I and Count Roger of Antioch to enter into a fully-fledged treaty of peace and alliance of limited duration (including oath and provision of hostages) with the ruler of Aleppo, so that they stood by his side against other Muslims, ready for battle.<sup>63</sup> Only when the Franks broke another treaty, by raiding a Muslim market at Baniyas in 1157, an act that was condemned by Christian and Muslim chroniclers alike, were Christian prisoners-of-war put to death in revenge.<sup>64</sup>

Köhler makes the point very strongly that the military elites of both the Latin Christian and Muslim societies worked within a common system of shared values and mutually acceptable hostage practices. This interpretation is not without significance today, when a clash of civilisations' ideology can be manipulated to suggest that religion is an impermeable barrier to working cooperatively with the Other, even in the context of military confrontation.

## Notes

1 The ceremony is shown by the BBC, making it available to a large audience, although the viewers may not appreciate the significance of the brief hostageship amidst all the televisual pageantry.

2 Kosto, 225.

- 3 A.J. Holden, ed., and S. Gregory, trans., *History of William Marshal*, with historical notes by D. Crouch, 3 vols. (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2002–2006), I, 27–35; II, 485–654.
- 4 J. Crosland, *William the Marshal: The Last Great Feudal Baron* (London: Owen, 1962); G. Duby, *Guillaume le Maréchal* (Paris: Fayard, 1983); D. Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147–1219* (London: Longman, 1990); T. Asbridge, *The Greatest Knight: The Remarkable Life of William Marshal: The Power behind Five English Thrones* (London: Ecco Press, 2015).
- 5 F. Whitehead, ed., *La Chanson de Roland* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), using the Oxford ‘O’ MS c. 1140. Henceforth *Roland*.
- 6 *Roland*, ll. 40–44.
- 7 *Roland*, ll. 3671–74; ll. 3984–87.
- 8 *Roland*, ll. 3766, 3781, 3933, 3946–93.
- 9 *Roland*, ll. 205–09.
- 10 Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1968–80). In vol. 1, Chibnall identifies over 100 sources used by Orderic, 48. Henceforth *Ecclesiastical History*.
- 11 This is a confused reference to Malik-Ghazi, Danishmend emir. The whole of Orderic’s chapter 24, book X (vol. 5, 354–81), is devoted to the supposed events.
- 12 *Ecclesiastical History*, fn. 3, 358–59, which draws attention to the romance as aspects of the tale. *Les redactions en vers de la Prise d’Orange*, C. Regnier, (Paris, 1966) provides a good parallel, although the hero, William, is not captured but drawn to the adventure from love of the beautiful pagan queen Orable.
- 13 *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 5, 378–79 and fn. 3, debunks the romance aspects of the story.
- 14 *Ecclesiastical History*, book III, vol. 2, 180–1.
- 15 *Ecclesiastical History*, 182–3.
- 16 *Ecclesiastical History*, 196–7.
- 17 *Ecclesiastical History*, Book. IV, 212–13.
- 18 *Ecclesiastical History*, 212–13.
- 19 *Ecclesiastical History*, 214–15.
- 20 Kosto, 25.
- 21 *Ecclesiastical History*, Bk XII, ch. 8, pp. 206–9. The Angevin source, *Gesta consulum andegavorum*, blames King Henry, rather than count Stephen for the mistreatment of the people of Alençon, but otherwise the story is the same: 206, n.2.
- 22 S. Kay, ed. and trans., *Raoul de Cambrai* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992). Henceforth *Raoul*.
- 23 *Raoul*, 48–9; cf. alternative trans. Jessie Crosland, *Raoul de Cambrai, An Old French Epic* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1926; revised and with a new introduction by Richard Abels, 1993), accessed 1 October 2015, <http://www.usna.edu/Users/history/abels/hh315/RAOUL/htm-RAOUL>, Laisse 38.
- 24 Crosland, Laisse 40.
- 25 *Raoul*, ll. 730–33, 56–7.
- 26 M. Strickland, *War and Chivalry: the conduct and perception of war in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 240–2, 231–5.
- 27 W.M. Hackett, ed., *Girart de Roussillon*, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 3 vols. (Paris, 1953–55). Support for this suggestion requires additional research.
- 28 Strickland, *War*, 240–2, 231–5.
- 29 *Girart de Roussillon*, vol. 1, 88, ll. 1791–94’ 89, ll. 2014–21: ‘War is not a game!’, l. 2016.
- 30 *Girart de Roussillon*, 388.
- 31 *Girart de Roussillon*, 379–80.

- 32 *Girart de Roussillon*, vol. 2, 388, ll. 641–8.
- 33 F. Yeandle, ed., *Girart de Vienne* (New York: Columbia University Press 1930), 121, ll. 3679–88.
- 34 *Girart de Vienne*, p. 124.
- 35 M. Strickland, *sub verba*, esp. 200–01.
- 36 *Girart de Roussillon*, vol. 2, 398.
- 37 *Girart de Roussillon*, vol. 2, 401.
- 38 H. Waquet, ed., *Vie de Louis le Gros* (Paris, 1929), for the Latin text. Suger, *Deeds of Louis the Fat*, trans. R. Cusimano and J. Moorhead (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1992) cited here.
- 39 Suger, *Deeds*, 7.
- 40 Suger, *Deeds*, 60.
- 41 Suger, *Deeds*, 136.
- 42 Suger, *Deeds*, 137.
- 43 Suger, *Deeds*, 95.
- 44 Suger, *Deeds*, 102.
- 45 N.F. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: Writing of History in 12th century England* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1977).
- 46 Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, ed. and trans. M. Ailes with M. Barber (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003); H.J. Nicholson, trans., *Chronicle of the Third Crusade: A Translation of the Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, Crusader Texts in Translation 3 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1997).
- 47 Robert F. Cook, “*Chanson d’Antioche*”, *chanson de geste: Le cycle de la croisade est-il-épique?* Purdue University Monographs in Romance Languages 2 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1980).
- 48 S. Duparc-Quioc, ed., *Chanson d’Antioche*, Document relatifs à l’histoire des croisades publiés par l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres 11, 2 vols. (Paris, 1976, 1978); S.B. Edgington & C.E. Sweetenham, trans., *Chanson d’Antioche* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), cited here, *laissez* 170–87, pp. 197–210. Henceforth *Antioche*.
- 49 Peter Tudebode, ‘*Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*,’ *RHC Occ* 3 (Paris, 1866); Peter Tudebode, *Historia de Hierosolymitano Itinere*, trans. J.H. & L. Hill (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1974) cited here, 58–9.
- 50 *Antioche*, 205, *laisse* 181.
- 51 *Antioche*, 200–2, *laissez* 174–75.
- 52 *Antioche*, 202, fn. 311; Tudebode, 717–882; Robert the Monk, *Robert the Monk’s History of the First Crusade*, trans. C.E. Sweetenham, Crusade Texts in Translation 11 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 139–41.
- 53 *Antioche*, 206–8, *laissez* 183–186.
- 54 *Antioche*, 208, *laisse* 186.
- 55 C. Sweetenham and L.M. Paterson, ed. and trans., *Canso d’Antiocha* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 206–7. Henceforth *Canso*.
- 56 *Canso*, all quotes 206–07.
- 57 E. Langlois, ed., *Le Couronnement de Louis*, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1925), 74, *laisse* 58, ll. 2362 ff.
- 58 *Couronnement*, *laisse* 59, ll. 2439–41.
- 59 *Couronnement*, 77, ll. 2448–51.
- 60 M.A. Köhler, *Alliances and Treaties between Frankish and Muslim Rulers in the Middle East* (Leiden, 2013).
- 61 Köhler, *Alliances*, 34
- 62 Köhler, *Alliances*, 76. Later, when the Muslim hostages escaped, the town ‘refused the tribute without releasing their Frankish hostages’.
- 63 Köhler, *Alliances*, 102–3. The incident took place at Shayzar in 1115.
- 64 Köhler, *Alliances*, 171–2.



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## 6 *Exigens Obsides Ab Eis*

### Hostages under King John of England, 1199–1216

*Cristian Ispir*

Roger of Wendover, the chronicler-monk from St Albans, wrote under 1208: '[The king] went against all the magnates of the realm and brought back to obedience those whom he particularly distrusted, by demanding hostages from them' (*exigens obsides ab eis*).<sup>1</sup> Later, his continuator, Matthew Paris, paraphrased Roger, noting that the king 'made all whom he distrusted swear allegiance to him by taking special hostages from them' (*accipiens ab eisdem obsides speciales*).<sup>2</sup> The two chroniclers have long been known to offer more rhetoric and personal bias than historical fact, but in this they are likely to have stumbled upon one of King John of England's main regnal signatures: a *special* approach to the institution of hostageship.<sup>3</sup>

The reign of King John (1199–1216) has long been identified with a period of heavy-handedness, of aggressive kingship emanating from the king's personality and a low-point of Anglo-Angevin monarchy.<sup>4</sup> While English common law developed and legal expectations improved, royal performance plummeted, generating baronial dissatisfaction and increased opposition to the king. Studies of the period have traditionally emphasised abuse and mishandling, most often as a subtext to Magna Carta's remarkable ambitions and achievements.<sup>5</sup> The question of hostages is no different. Unlike previous periods, post-Conquest strategies of taking and giving of hostages have not received much attention outside focused commentaries of Magna Carta and its forty-ninth clause.<sup>6</sup> Neither was King John's abuse of hostageship an invention of modern historiography: Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris insisted on it, and so did many contemporaneous chroniclers. The *Crowland Chronicle*, the most perceptive source of John's reign, only mentions Magna Carta in passing.<sup>7</sup> Its author, Roger of Crowland, devotes only a few words to the Runnymede settlement, does not transcribe the charter, but is careful to note that the restoration of hostages was part of the agreement.<sup>8</sup> Although Adam Kostó's work *Hostages in the Middle Ages* did much to set the theoretical framework for the existence of hostages throughout the medieval West, to date, King John's hostage policy has not been sufficiently examined.

What constituted a hostage in the early thirteenth century? First of all, hostages were one kind of surety, a promise in the form of a person. Historians have written about 'sureties,' guarantees, coercive mechanisms,

pledges in view of compliance.<sup>9</sup> The hostage in the thirteenth century was not very different from that of earlier periods.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, we can talk about a European institution of hostageship. What the Roman, Frankish, Anglo-Saxon, Angevin and any other pre-industrial hostages share with each other is their embodiment of a covenant, the expression of the commitment to put flesh on an intangibility. In these societies, a verbal commitment was often regarded as insufficient and needed to be buttressed with a material guarantee, which not only secured the verbal contract, but also added political value to it. A hostage is a mark of submission, so any hostage grantor is, by definition, in a subaltern position relative to the grantee. Elements such as coercion, violent taking and anxiety are closer to modern perceptions of terrorist 'hostage-situations' than to ancient and medieval strategies of power. Obviously, coercion and anxiety have a serious role to play in almost all instances of hostageship, but they come second. Essential to the act of hostage-taking and giving is the attempt to reach a political settlement. Describing the practice of hostage-taking in the Carolingian world, Kosto observed that 'the medieval hostage was a form of personal surety, a person deprived of liberty by a second person in order to guarantee an undertaking by a third person.'<sup>11</sup> The High and Late Middle Ages witness a shift in the functionality of hostages. From agents of alliance-building based on bilateral exchange between rulers, they become representational and financial instruments, human pledges standing in for particular individuals or corporate bodies.<sup>12</sup>

What we see in the reign of King John and in fact in the high and late medieval period more widely is a departure from a Classical model of hostageship based on reciprocity and the adoption of a menacing position. Under John, trust was undermined and strategies of persuasion gave way to symbolic expressions of threat. What was also lost in the process was a positive projection of power. By using and abusing the delicate institution of hostageship as an avenue to the promotion of successful kingship—insofar as the hostage was also an expression of submission on the part of the grantor—John locked himself out of any positive strategy of persuasion, turning hostageship into a contested space of political communication. He adopted suspicion instead of trust and went down a spiral of ever-growing misery, for himself, his barons and for the realm at large.<sup>13</sup>

In this paper, I wish to explore some of the mechanisms of John's policy of hostage taking. By looking at the nature of hostageship under John, at who was taken hostage, the reasons why, it is hoped that some new features of John's 'hostage policy' will emerge. Finally, it will be tentatively suggested that the baronial resentment to hostages was not only John's doing or that of a general context of an abusive royal hostage-taking policy, but also of a shift in aristocratic expectations as to the functionality of hostages, in particular a bouleversement in the hierarchy of guarantees.

All this is possible given the profusion of the source material at our disposal. In addition to the narrative sources, both lay and ecclesiastical, the documentary evidence is plentiful. The reign of King John saw the

emergence of systematically enrolled administrative documentation, the Chancery Rolls.<sup>14</sup> Thanks to this remarkable body of evidence, we can see a king busy giving instructions to his officials and organizing the material and human resources of the kingdom. Hostages are a central theme of the royal chancery output, where we see them as objects of the king's political, financial as well as symbolic negotiation with the aristocracy. The language of contract and finance deployed by the *Patent*, *Close*, *Fine* as well as *Liberate* rolls in regard to hostages is very suggestive of the way hostages were regarded by King John. Hostages appear in these documents as assurances of payment or, more importantly still, the performance of faithful service, where it usually implies the grantor's precursory acquisition of the king's *ira et malevolentia* ('anger and hostility'), as John Joliffe once remarked.<sup>15</sup> As such, the hostage is the bandage that helps heal the broken relationship between the grantor and the king.

I would like to argue here that John explored every type of hostage strategy available at the time. During his seventeen-year-long reign, he was able to tap into all the possible benefits, large and small, that the exploitation of hostage resources permitted, while incurring the costs of using such an instrument. When John succeeded his brother Richard to the throne of England, the political and financial situation of the Angevin monarchy was precarious. The coffers had been bled dry by a decade of crusading and continental warfare. The Scots, Welsh and Irish were all uneasy neighbours, eager to chip away at the English authority. The 'empire' which John inherited in 1199 was a decaying conglomerate of factious peoples, eroded authority and impoverished treasuries waiting for the right moment to break down. Against this backdrop of insecurity, the loss of Normandy and the many crises that John's rule underwent did little to put John's mind at ease. He demanded hostages from many of his subjects and political partners.

One way hostages were used was to secure a financial transaction, which in most cases implied a commitment to pay at a certain date and under certain conditions rather than immediate cash down. The hostages were there to ensure that the proffer would be honoured. The practice of taking human pledges to make sure that performance rather than promise prevailed was one of the features of John's general financial strategy. Hostages were thus taken *pro securitate de fino predicto* ('for the security of that fine').<sup>16</sup> After the loss of his Norman lands, John increasingly used this means of financial coercion as the treasury was fast depleting.

A look at John's pipe rolls, the government's financial records, shows that many barons ended up on the negative side of the balance and, most importantly, failed to clear their debt for many years.<sup>17</sup> William de Mowbray had incurred a debt of £753 in 1213 after many years of non-payment.<sup>18</sup> In 1215, the king took hostages from William de L'Isle who had proffered a fine but found himself unable to pay up.<sup>19</sup> Hostages were demanded both for hastening the payment of a debt and for making sure that the grantor would add deed to word.

Financial trouble went hand in hand with political trouble and the perspective of disloyalty.

Historians largely agree that John's reign was spent in a general climate of royal suspicion, which increasingly worsened. When he suspected a baron of treason or simply of insufficient loyalty, John demanded hostages to ensure faithful service. In 1205, Roger de Montbegon gave the king four hostages 'that the King desired to have of him as a security for faithful service.'<sup>20</sup> *Per fidei servitio suo* resounds in almost all the chancery rolls. Captured at Mirebeau in 1202 and later appointed seneschal of Poitou, Savary de Mauléon continued to render hostages to the king as an insurance policy that he would not act against him again.<sup>21</sup> Wendover, as we have seen, claimed that when the pope absolved the barons from the ties of homage to the king in 1208, John, fearing his own excommunication, demanded that every leading man in England should hand over their sons, nephews or other blood relations to the king's messengers.<sup>22</sup> No other moment in the whole history of John's reign, however, are the king's fear and suspicion of treason better expressed than in 1212, following the rumours of a plot against his life.<sup>23</sup> The king took many hostages from Richard of Umfraville,<sup>24</sup> David, earl of Huntingdon<sup>25</sup>, earl Richard de Clare and Richard de Lucy of Egre-mont, Robert fitzWalter, Roger of Merlay, Richard of Lerk, Robert de Vaux, Robert de Mesnil<sup>26</sup> and from many others. Suspicion translated into an *a priori* loss of the king's customary *benevolentia* incurred by the subject. Hostages had a restorative political function. The sources speak of hostages being given so that the donor would have the king's good will, implying the broken contract that they sought to restore.

In addition to these two general types of hostage functionalities, there is a third which John also used but which has not received much attention from historians of Angevin government. This can be called communicative or symbolic hostage-taking. It did not exist independently but was grafted onto one or the other hostage strategies, but can still be regarded as a type in itself because of its significance for the operation of kingship. John took hostages from his subjects to subject the donors to his rule. He would thus use them for the purpose of displaying power and disabling his political partners. As Andrew Cowell has pointed out in the context of medieval aristocratic use of reciprocity and violence, the 'destructive strategy' that a political agent adopts seeks to undermine the opponent's ability to reciprocate a gift.<sup>27</sup> In John's case, this takes the form of the symbolic poisoned gift of political independence that the hostage donor finds himself unable to offer. The practical side of this 'destructive strategy' lies in the selection of hostages and the timing of their demand, as we shall presently see.

Whether it was for financial, political or symbolic reasons, the institution of hostageship relied on what may be regarded as the hierarchy of promises. The evidence suggests that human suretyship came highest in a hierarchy of guarantees.<sup>28</sup> Roger of Wendover notes that when King John's treaty with the Scots was agreed at Norham in 1209, King William pledged

twelve marks of silver 'as a security for peace' (*pro bono pacis*) and then, 'for the better security of it' (*ad maiorem securitatem*), he also gave his two daughters to King John 'that, by this arrangement the peace might be more confirmed between them' (*ut per hoc inter eos pax firmitior haberetur*).<sup>29</sup>

The contractual basis of an agreement between the king and his subjects depended on a shared desire to reduce risks on either side and to promote efficient guarantees. Both partners were aware of the three instruments that were conducive to positive performance: first came the verbal covenant, the oath, that purely medieval bond that was the basis of all transactions, usually sacralised.<sup>30</sup> Second, there was the written bond in the form of a charter and as literate society evolved, this type of bond vied with the first for preeminence, as Michael Clanchy has pointed out.<sup>31</sup> Hostages, and often other material pledges such as lands and castles, were a last resort, the third notch in this arrangement. The language of the narrative sources, the chancery rolls as well as clause 49 of the Great Charter, suggest a hierarchical typology of suretyship. In 1213, William fitzSawall placed twelve hostages in John's custody 'for the security of a charter.'<sup>32</sup> Later, King John found out that it was not enough to demand oaths and charters from his barons. His suspicion prompted him to go the whole way in guaranteeing faithful service or the payment of a fine or debt with hostages.<sup>33</sup> The case of William de Briouze is very indicative of this hierarchy of promises. In 1208, John went against William, who was one of his leading magnates. The reason for this is still debated but it must have had much to do with William's local power, his debt at the Exchequer and John's fear of general loss of mastery over his barons.<sup>34</sup> Hostages were a critical element of the king's conflict with William.<sup>35</sup> According to Wendover, John had demanded hostages from William but Matilda, his wife, refused, recalling how Arthur of Brittany had died in John's custody.<sup>36</sup> The king of Connaught was less successful in refusing the king of England but he did not end up in prison. In 1210, Cathal Crobderg refused to render his son and suggested alternative hostages but finally had to give in.<sup>37</sup> It is significant that William de Briouze reportedly offered to 'make amends without the security of hostages,' by appealing to the judgment of his peers in the king's court.<sup>38</sup> Whether Wendover is to be believed or not, the implication was that no other guarantees could surpass the submission of hostages. In the *History of William Marshal*, hostages are an important theme in John's dealings with William. John took a large number of hostages from the Marshal, which drove the latter to noble exasperation.<sup>39</sup> In all this symbolic harassment, the Marshal never appealed to the judgment of his peers, although he was arguably closer to the king than William de Briouze had ever been.

Hostages were also taken from the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish. The Articles of the Barons and the 1215 version of the Great Charter reflected this aspect of John's foreign policy. Clauses 58 and 59 of the Great Charter demand the release and return of the Welsh and Scottish hostages (*reddemus obsides; de obsidibus reddendis*) that John had in custody.<sup>40</sup> A bitter history

of hostage-taking puts flesh on the two charter clauses. John learned about a conspiracy brewing in Scotland in 1209 and decided to intervene north of the Humber 'to prevent his enemies from uniting their forces.'<sup>41</sup> As a result, King William handed over his two daughters, Margaret and Isabella, as hostages to the king of England to have the king's good-will.<sup>42</sup> The two women were still in custody when John died.<sup>43</sup> However, they were not the only Scottish hostages in royal custody. Still in 1209, John had insisted on obtaining over a dozen hostages 'from among the sons of the Scottish nobility.'<sup>44</sup> Earl Gilbert of Strathclyde's son was still in John's custody in 1213.<sup>45</sup> John's Scottish hostages were an important source for the display of power. The King advertised his precious resources at the feast of St John the Baptist in 1213 in what may only be considered as a statement of power.<sup>46</sup> The Welsh were not spared either. In 1211, John launched an expedition against Llywelyn, prince of Gwynedd. After a protracted campaign, Llywelyn handed over his bastard son Gruffydd as well as thirty other hostages, surrendered border territory and proffered a fine for good behaviour.<sup>47</sup> In 1214, John ordered the release of three Welsh nobles previously held by Engelard de Cigogné at Gloucester.<sup>48</sup>

A salient feature of John's hostage-policy was that he took many female hostages.<sup>49</sup> It has been suggested that in the early thirteenth century, the female hostage re-emerged as an important asset for hostage-takers.<sup>50</sup> Gwen Seabourne discusses this more fully in the following chapter. Suffice it to say here that if the barons' sons represented the future of the *lignage*, then their daughters symbolised the family's potential for alliance-building. The majority of John's female hostages were his barons' daughters. John's reputation of a sexual predator may owe something to the fact that these women were kept away from their parents, something that could give rise to the darkest rumours.<sup>51</sup> Why would John desire his barons' daughters as hostages if not for himself? It is no surprise then to find Matthew Paris's mention of John's taking of hostages under 1208 right immediately before the accusation that the king ravished the barons' daughters.<sup>52</sup>

The identity of many of the individuals who gave hostages remains unknown. However, the available evidence suggests that John made use of hostages in his relations with all sorts of people. On this question, historians have only examined the great barons. It is true that men like William Marshal, William of Albini, Robert de Ros, Robert de Vieuxpont, Robert de Vaux and Robert fitzWalter all placed hostages in pledge to the king.<sup>53</sup> But the story does not stop there. Lesser barons did just as much. Robert de Muschamp had given two hostages before 1213.<sup>54</sup> Adam of Newmarket's two sons were still in the king's custody at Corfe at that time.<sup>55</sup> Most hostages taken from the aristocracy for securing good faith and loyalty were what Kosto described as 'open-ended agreements.'<sup>56</sup> The duration of detention was not included in the terms of surrender, whereas other conditions were, such as pledges to accompany the hostages, their number and identity and those who would act as custodians as well as the place of detention.

Cities, too, pledged hostages in order that they may have the king's goodwill or that they may guarantee an agreement made with the king. Bristol surrendered eight hostages in 1200. Also in 1200, the king reportedly took one hundred and fifty hostages from the city of Angers.<sup>57</sup> In the following year, the burgesses of York are said to have paid a fine in exchange for delivering hostages to the king.<sup>58</sup> The Patent Rolls tell how they were quit of their obligation to give hostages and how these were free to return *in partes suas*. In 1212, the Flemish of the city of Lille were pleading for the release of their hostages.<sup>59</sup> The men of Dunwich were about to have their hostages released in 1215.<sup>60</sup> The Templars, too, handed over hostages to the king on at least one occasion.<sup>61</sup>

The logic of hostageship cannot survive outside the notion that the pledge must have a certain value for the recipient. More importantly, the taking and giving of hostages presupposes a double contract: one is the agreement which the hostage guarantees. The other is of a more subtle kind: it binds two partners in an axiological contract, where they agree on the sufficiency and suitability of the value attached to the human pledge. As Kosto noted, 'the fact that the hostage must be of some value to the debtor requires a pre-existing personal or institutional relationship between the hostage and the grantor of the hostage that underlies that value.'<sup>62</sup> This is more than a relationship between the grantor and the pledge, for it all depends on the complicity of both grantor and grantee in the assessment of the hostage. This sometimes becomes a matter of negotiation. The Fine Rolls speak of *bonos obsides* ('good hostages'), *sufficientes plegios* ('adequate pledges'), *obsides sufficientes* ('adequate hostages'). The evidence is not limited to government records. Outside John's inner circles, we find similar perceptions: The *Histoire des ducs de Normandie* mentions the *bons hostages* ('good hostages'). The implication is that John's concern for the suitability of his hostages finds its meaning in the king's suspicion that the donor would surrender valueless hostages, thus increasing John's risk of entering unguaranteed agreements. A precedent that John might have known was William Marshal's father, John Marshal. John had offered his third son as hostage to King Stephen in 1152. Stephen soon discovered that the boy had more value to him than to his father, who allegedly said that 'he did not care about the child, since he still had the anvils and hammers to produce even finer ones.' 'When the king heard of this reaction,' writes the biographer, 'he was furious.' The English translation does not really do justice to the French, which is *grant maltalent e ire*, ('inflamed and furious'), suggesting that the king was not so much angry with the prospect of the Marshal invalidating the agreement—which he did—than with having been led to believe that young William's hostageship was a guarantee whose value they had both agreed on. The contract was thus broken, although the original agreement that young William guaranteed was still on and the subsequent history shows at least Stephen preserving the terms of the agreement, though threatening with enforcement. The negotiation of the value of the human surety led in



this case to contestation, which demonstrates how significant the axiological contract can be.

John's selection of good hostages rested on their relationship to the grantor and on quantity. Although there were some barons who only pledged their vassals as hostages to the king, most handed over their kinsmen.<sup>63</sup> Kinship was an important aspect of hostageship. The surest pledges were sons and daughters. Matthew Paris reflects this understanding in both *Chronica Majora* and the *Flores Historiarum*. If in the *Chronica*, he has Matilda de Briouze refuse to hand over her children (*pueros*) as hostages to the king, then in the abridged *Flores*, many nobles are reluctant to give their sons and dear ones (*filios et caros nostros*) to the king.<sup>64</sup> Matthew drives the point home when he writes that 'some handed over their sons, others their nephews and close relatives to the king's envoys.'<sup>65</sup>

Many of the individuals who are mentioned in the royal records to have handed over hostages gave their closest kin to the king. Sons, daughters, nephews: they are the best hostages John expects because their fathers and uncles would not dare act against him knowing their family was at his mercy. Savary de Mauléon should be remembered in this connection. He was not different from many other barons. Captured at Mirebeau in 1202 when he rebelled against the king, he managed to obtain the king's forgiveness and even secured, as already noted, the seneschalship of Poitou in 1205. However, in that same year, he pledged a remarkable list of twenty-five hostages, in exchange for John's good will.<sup>66</sup> First on that list were his mother and his wife. Nevertheless, he was not the only one to have surrendered his own mother for faithful service under King John. Robert de Vaux offered his mother as hostage in 1213.<sup>67</sup>

When sons were selected as sureties on behalf of their fathers, the eldest son was of higher value because he was the heir to the family patrimony. The *History of William Marshal* has a lot to say about the grief fathers must have felt when the king demanded their sons. In 1205, the Marshal was suspected of insufficient loyalty to the king. To prove his allegiance and love for John, William 'readily' surrendered his eldest son, 'who was most dear to him.'<sup>68</sup> As if that was not enough, the king demanded his second son, Richard, 'because he wanted to be sure of the Marshal's loyalty.'<sup>69</sup> Lucianus d'Arques gave his two sons and his nephew in 1213.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Robert de Ros gave his son and nephew.<sup>71</sup> The threat that John promoted in his abusive policy was not only personal, but patrimonial. Hostages were, as Kosto noted, more than individuals. They represented patrimonial and territorial interests.<sup>72</sup> By seizing his barons' sons, the king introduced an element of uncertainty in the lives of entire baronial families. John also tended to take more than one hostage from each donor. John of Curcy pledged eight hostages.<sup>73</sup> Walter de Lacy gave six hostages in 1204.<sup>74</sup> Savary de Mauléon's distinguished list of twenty-five hostages must have made quite an impression.

Once the hostages had been taken, they were entrusted to various custodians. Many royal letters are very specific as to which hostage should go

to which custodian, with whole lists written on the dorse of the chancery membranes. Narrative sources are, however, generally silent as to the custodial hostages' living conditions. Generally kept in a castle, they became part of the castle's possessions and were mentioned each time the castle changed hands. As McKechnie pointed out, the custody of hostages could be a desirable office.<sup>75</sup> In 1199, a certain Alan offered three greyhounds and a sighthound for the custody of a hostage of Brittany held by the abbot of Fécamp.<sup>76</sup> This would suggest that hostages were being kept not only in castles but also in monasteries. Rarely, some very valuable hostages, like William Marshal's eldest son, were kept at court.<sup>77</sup> William himself had been a 'court' hostage for King Stephen when he was a child. In these cases, the king's strategy was to guarantee the long-term loyalty of the hostage's family through a clear act of political communication.<sup>78</sup>

Provision for clothes and other necessities for the use of hostages appears on the Pipe Rolls.<sup>79</sup> We cannot say for sure what the detention conditions were overall, but there is evidence that John was keeping a close watch on his hostages. In one letter, John gave instruction that some hostages were to be well and closely guarded.<sup>80</sup> *Firmiter tenendum* ('to be firmly held') was also common to many hostage agreements and instructions for custody. The Welsh hostages whom John released in 1214 had been allowed to borrow money for their upkeep, but a minimum had been provided by the king's alms.<sup>81</sup> The two daughters of the King of Scotland were honourably treated in their confinement in Corfe Castle.<sup>82</sup>

Although the terms under which hostages were taken do not generally say anything about the intended duration of custody, we can still see that John kept his hostages for long periods of time. Michael, a 'young hostage' was released in 1212 after a confinement of two years and three weeks.<sup>83</sup> In 1215, the Scottish royal hostages had been in confinement for six years. The Fine Rolls tell us that in 1213, Mabilia de Clare gave her son John and daughter Helena to guarantee a fine proffered to the king, with the stipulation that the hostages would be returned within three years.<sup>84</sup> Many letters stated that the hostages were to be kept *quamdiu nobis placuit* ('for as long as we please').<sup>85</sup> Many of the hostages were taken *ad libitum* ('as is pleasing'). John's abuse of hostageship was not only a question of numbers, but also of general attitude, whereby the king fostered political animosity.

Hostages also died in custody.<sup>86</sup> Matilda and William (IV) de Briouze were allegedly starved to death.<sup>87</sup> Geoffrey of Norwich died after a long imprisonment while one of Marshal's hostages simply died in prison.<sup>88</sup> In 1212, John hanged twenty-eight Welsh hostages in Nottingham, including a little boy, whom some sources describe as 'innocent.'<sup>89</sup> Although the sources do not preserve the names of the many hostages who died in John's custody, the king clearly 'had a reputation as an untrustworthy custodian of important guests.'<sup>90</sup> Matilda de Briouze could still remember Arthur's death more than five years before, while Guillaume le Breton's bad press may have more than a kernel of truth in it.<sup>91</sup>

John released and returned many of the hostages but rarely did he do it graciously. Normally, a hostage was released in exchange for payment or for other hostages. John le Teigre pledged one hundred marks and ten 'big, fair and tasty hares' in 1207 to be released, though he was a surety, not a captured prisoner.<sup>92</sup> Henry des Roches gave 20 marks to let his son take his place as surety.<sup>93</sup> The sources suggest that a hundred marks may have been the average price for the release of one or more hostages.<sup>94</sup> However, the king could show compassion. In 1213, John of Monmouth's ailing son was released.<sup>95</sup> Health might have been the reason why Milo FitzBishop offered forty marks for the right to change his hostage.<sup>96</sup> Under the provisions of the Great Charter, the king ordered the release of hostages held by royal custodians.<sup>97</sup> Since many had handed hostages as pledges for payment, this injunction was, from an economic point of view, equivalent to the destruction of the financial records.

Finally, I wish to address an aspect of baronial resistance to John's hostage policy. This topic has proved most popular with historians of the period. However, I would like to draw attention to two hitherto unexamined points: one is the aristocratic practice of hostage-taking and the other the relation between the hierarchy of promises and the aristocratic perception of John's hostage policy. Did the nobles exchange or demand hostages from each other? The evidence is very thin but there is enough to suggest that the English aristocracy at least envisaged accessing the resources of hostageship for themselves.<sup>98</sup> Again, the *History of William Marshal* sheds light in this otherwise dark corner:

'My lord', said John of Earley, 'I have great fears about treachery. Before you go on your journey of yours, take hostages from amongst your barons; you would be wise to do so, and that is my advice.' 'Enough of that', the Marshal said, 'I would not wish just now, even for the price of a hundred marks in silver, that they came to know for certain that you had said such a thing, for it would be recorded to our eternal shame.'<sup>99</sup>

These happened before the king demanded hostages from the Marshal. We are less interested in whether the Marshal was historically faced with the option to demand hostages from his vassals—which might only be the biographer's strategy to bestow honourable and heroic qualities on the Marshal—than we are in the possibility that the biographer's choices of how to describe (or invent) things reflect typical choices and strategies used by the baronage, to which John of Earley belonged.<sup>100</sup> This narrative is doubly charged: the aristocratic reflex as embodied by John of Earley's advice, was one of hostage-taking, but chivalric honourability precluded it, not so much because guarantees were no longer required, but because verbal and written guarantees were gaining ground, thus producing a shift in the regular hierarchy of promises. King John had angered the baronage with his obsession with hostages at a time when the nobility was moving away from

an understanding of the human pledge as sufficient guarantee to a concept of suretyship in which written contracts and words of honour prevailed. As Björn Weiler observed, by the thirteenth century, ‘demanding hostages denoted tyranny, and it was excusable only if those who offered them did so voluntarily, or if they had a proven record of breaking their promises.’<sup>101</sup> It may also be that the shift in the general understanding of how loyalty may be guaranteed led to the deprecation of the king’s practice of demanding hostages from his subjects. This might also explain why the ‘security clause’ of the 1215 Magna Carta (clause 61) did not make use of hostages. As John had demanded hostages from the baronage for ‘peace and faithful service,’ so one would expect—symmetrically—that the Runnymede settlement would be guaranteed with conditional hostages.<sup>102</sup> Yet, while the clause authorised the barons to ‘distrain and distress the king’ and enjoined on the king to give security by means of charters,<sup>103</sup> it did not address the question whether the king ought to give hostages to communicate good faith towards his barons. The security clause symbolised, in Galbraith’s words, ‘the most fantastic surrender of any English king to his subjects,’ so I do not think that turning hostageship on John would have made much difference in terms of offense done to the Crown.<sup>104</sup> The main objective of the security clause was, as David Carpenter argued, to threaten the king and to make sure that he would play by the rules.<sup>105</sup> Demanding and keeping hostages was based on the same logic. I therefore think that the absence of hostages from the security clause should be taken as a statement of the barons’ refusal to share in John’s hostage policy. Charters, not human sureties, would guarantee the terms of the agreement.

## Notes

- 1 Wendover, II, 48.
- 2 Henry Luard, ed., *Flores Historiarum* (London: H. M. Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), ii, 136.
- 3 William McKechnie, *Magna Carta: A Commentary on the Great Charter of King John* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1914), 441.
- 4 David Carpenter, *Magna Carta* (London: Penguin, 2015), 189–244.
- 5 The most complete analysis of John’s hostage policy is in McKechnie’s *Magna Carta*.
- 6 McKechnie, *Magna Carta*, 441–4.
- 7 The text of the Chronicle has been edited by the author of this article as part of his doctoral thesis, but at the time this chapter was submitted, the thesis had not been examined. References to the text of the *Crowland Chronicle* are thus given in Stubbs’s edition of Coventry, ii, 196–279.
- 8 Coventry, ii, 221.
- 9 Kosto, 9–19.
- 10 Kosto, 78.
- 11 Adam Kosto, ‘Hostages in the Carolingian World (714–840),’ *Early Medieval Europe* 11 (2002): 123.
- 12 Kosto, 92–8.

- 13 James Holt, *Magna Carta*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 189.
- 14 David Carpenter, '“In Testimonium Factorum Brevium”: The Beginnings of the English Chancery Rolls,' in *Records, Administration and Aristocratic Society in the Anglo-Norman Realm*, ed. Nicholas Vincent (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 1–28 and 'The English Royal Chancery in the Thirteenth Century,' in *English Government in the Thirteenth Century*, ed. Adrian Jobson (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2004), 49–70; Nicholas Vincent, 'Why 1199? Bureaucracy and Enrolment under John and His Contemporaries,' in Jobson, *Government*, 17–48.
- 15 John Joliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1963), 87–109.
- 16 *Rot. Fin.*, xlv.
- 17 Nick Barratt, 'The Revenue of King John,' *English Historical Review* 111 (1996): 851.
- 18 James Holt, *The Northerners: A Study in the Reign of King John* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 172.
- 19 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 128.
- 20 *Rot. Fin.*, 275
- 21 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 110, 132.
- 22 Luard, *Flores*, ii, 48; Henry Luard, ed., *Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora* (London: Longman & Co, 1872–1883), ii, 523.
- 23 Holt, *Magna Carta*, 193.
- 24 Sidney Painter, *The Reign of King John* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1949), 267.
- 25 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 143.
- 26 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 95, 96, 99, 101, 143.
- 27 Andrew Cowell, *The Medieval Warrior Aristocracy: Gifts, Violence, Performance, and the Sacred* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), 9–10.
- 28 Kosto, 31.
- 29 Luard, *Flores*, iii, 226–7; Roger of Wendover, *Roger of Wendover's Flowers of History*, trans. John A. Giles (London: H.G. Bohn, 1849), 249; David Carpenter has recently discovered the text of the Anglo-Scottish treaty in a cartulary of St Augustine's Canterbury, TNA E 164/ 27, ff.137–137r.
- 30 Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging pardon and favor: Ritual and political order in early Medieval France* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 110–1.
- 31 Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1979), 260–6.
- 32 *Rot. Ch.*, 192.
- 33 McKechnie, *Magna Carta*, 441–2.
- 34 Colin Veach, 'King John and Royal Control in Ireland: Why William de Briouze had to be Destroyed,' *English Historical Review* 129 (2014): 1051–78.
- 35 Veach, 'Royal Control,' 1071.
- 36 Luard, *Flores*, ii, 48–9.
- 37 Seán Duffy, 'King John's Expedition to Ireland, 1210: The Evidence Reconsidered,' *Irish Historical Studies* 30 (1996): 21.
- 38 'Paratus sum et ero domino meo et sine obsidibus satisfacere, secundum iudicium curiae suae et baronum parium meorum, certo mihi assignato die et loco', Luard, *Flores*, ii, 49.
- 39 Duffy, 'Expedition,' 18.
- 40 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 55–6.
- 41 Willfred Warren, *King John* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 193.
- 42 MPCM II, 525.

- 43 *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, i, 466.
- 44 Duffy, 'Expedition', 18.
- 45 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 104.
- 46 Bain, i, 100–1.
- 47 Beverley Smith, 'Magna Carta and the Charters of the Welsh Princes,' *English Historical Review* 99 (1984): 344–62, 357; Warren, *King John*, 198.
- 48 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 125.
- 49 A list of twenty instances of female hostages handed over to the king may be found in Kosto, 86–92.
- 50 Kosto, 21.
- 51 Warren, *King John*, 189.
- 52 Luard, *Flores*, ii, 136.
- 53 Holt, *Northerners*, 83; Warren, *King John*, 181.
- 54 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 99, 106.
- 55 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 102.
- 56 Kosto, 27.
- 57 Howden, iv, 91–2, 125.
- 58 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 16.
- 59 PR 12 John, 182.
- 60 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 129.
- 61 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 116.
- 62 Kosto, 33.
- 63 Anthony Holden, ed., *History of William Marshall* (London: Anglo-Norman text society from Birkbeck College, 2002–2004), ii, 216–7 (vv.14319–14328).
- 64 Luard, *Flores*, ii, 136; MPCM II, 523.
- 65 MPCM II, 523.
- 66 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 55; he rendered at least seven hostages between 1205 and 1210: Holden, *William Marshal*, ii, 218–9 (vv. 13272–14448).
- 67 *Rot. Fin.*, 478; *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 95.
- 68 Holden, *William Marshal*, ii, 164–5 (vv. 13271–6).
- 69 Holden, *William Marshal*, ii, 164–5 (vv. 13364–7).
- 70 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 96–7.
- 71 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 197.
- 72 Kosto, 46.
- 73 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 46.
- 74 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 77.
- 75 McKechnie, *Magna Carta*, 444, no. 1.
- 76 *Rot. Fin.*, 29.
- 77 *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, i, 132.
- 78 Kosto, 45.
- 79 PR 3 John, 258, 115; PR 6 John, 17; PR 7 John, 133; PR 14 John, 6.
- 80 *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, i, 166.
- 81 *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, i, 181.
- 82 *Rot. Lit. Claus.*, i, 144, 157.
- 83 PR 14 John, 49.
- 84 *Rot. Fin.*, 478.
- 85 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 174.
- 86 Ralph Turner, *King John* (London: Longman, 1994), 17, 121.
- 87 *Annales Monastici* III, 33–4.
- 88 Duffy, 'Expedition,' 21.
- 89 Thomas Jones, trans., *Brut y tywysogyon, or, The Chronicle of the Princes: Peniarth Ms. 20 Version* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1952), 86; MPCM II, 534.

- 90 Duffy, 'Expedition,' 17.  
 91 He denounced John as the murderer of 'a great number of children and 183 hostages,' H-François Delaborde, ed., *Œuvres de Rigord et de Guillaume le Breton, historiens de Philippe-Auguste* (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1882) i, 171.  
 92 PR 9 John, 148; He still had to pledge his two sons until he could pay the king in full.  
 93 *Rot. Fin.*, 479.  
 94 PR 6 John, 78; Holden, *William Marshal*, ii, 176–7 (v. 13519); Robert Davies, *The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063–1415* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 257.  
 95 *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 103.  
 96 *Rot. Fin.*, 552.  
 97 McKechnie, *Magna Carta*, 443.  
 98 Björn Weiler, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture: England and Germany, c.121.1250* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), 97–8; Roger Le Manaunt handed over his daughter to Falkes de Breauté in 1220, *Curia regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III Preserved in the Public Record Office: 4 and 5 Henry III* (London: H.M. Stationery Office: Boydell Press, 1952), 226.  
 99 Holden, *William Marshal*, ii, 176–7 (vv. 13513–22).  
 100 David Crouch, *William Marshal: Court, Career and Chivalry in the Angevin Empire 1147 to 1219* (London: Longman, 1990), 54–5.  
 101 Weiler, *Kingship*, 46.  
 102 Hostages had been used in all types of political agreements, including international treaties, such as Henry I's treaty with the count of Flanders in 1101: Elizabeth Van Houts, 'The Anglo-Flemish treaty of 1101,' *Anglo-Norman Studies* 21 (1998): 169–741, 173–4.  
 103 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 62–5.  
 104 Galbraith, Vivian H. 'Runnymede revisited,' *Proceedings of the American Philological Society* 110 (1966): 307–17, 308.  
 105 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 328.

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- . *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Sixth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1204*. London: Printed for the Pipe Roll Society by J.W. Ruddock, 1940.
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## 7 Female Hostages

### Definitions and Distinctions

*Gwen Seabourne*

In 1209, Margaret and Isabella, daughters of William ‘the Lion,’ king of Scots, were handed over to King John of England at Carlisle.<sup>1</sup> They remained in English custody from 1209 until 1221 and 1222, respectively. The princesses are listed as hostages in Adam J. Kosto’s recent book, *Hostages in the Middle Ages*,<sup>2</sup> and, according to some English chronicles, this designation is correct.<sup>3</sup> Other sources, however, did not call them hostages, suggesting instead that, while Scots hostages were given to John in 1209, the two princesses did not belong to that group.<sup>4</sup> In some places, the young women’s marriage, perhaps to sons of John, or to a son of John and an English nobleman, was given as the reason for their transfer to the English king.<sup>5</sup>

This case suggests that individual instances of non-judicial confinement could admit of different interpretations. Such apparent vagueness is frustrating to the historian with an urge to categorise across gender and time period, but, as this paper will argue, being prepared to tolerate, and even embrace, a degree of vagueness is a prerequisite for those wishing to understand women’s non-judicial confinement in the Middle Ages.<sup>6</sup> The position of women with regard to hostageship is both more complex and more interesting than Kosto’s treatment implies. This paper will consider some of the difficulties with his analysis and will highlight some of the issues concerning female hostageship which deserve further examination.

#### Kosto’s Definition and Specific Cases

In *Hostages in the Middle Ages*, Professor Kosto proposes and uses to limit his subject matter a particular definition of ‘hostage,’ and suggests that those not following such a definition have been ‘imprecise.’<sup>7</sup> For him, a hostage is somebody who:

- (i) guarantees an agreement (ii) is not subject to ransom; (iii) is a third party, i.e. is not involved in the agreement being secured; (iv) is subject, actually or potentially, to the loss of personal liberty and (v) is, at least in theory, given rather than taken (and is acknowledged to have been given).

The last criterion, taken with Kosto's reliance on the labels attached to instances of confinement, seems to imply that the individual has been given *as a hostage* rather than in some other capacity (for example, as a preliminary to trial, as a judicially convicted prisoner, as a wife or ward.) This definition has much merit, but it may underestimate the difficulty of using medieval expressions of consent and volition to distinguish between hostages and prisoners,<sup>8</sup> and, of particular importance for this paper, it does not always fit well with Kosto's examples of 'female hostages.'<sup>9</sup>

It is probably not safe to regard Margaret and Isabella of Scotland as hostages. King John is likely to have used them as *quasi*-hostages, their retention calculated to keep the Scots from being unduly troublesome, but the better view appears to be that the Scots never acknowledged them to be hostages, instead handing them over in a less formal way, and with a view to marriage. It may be that the Scots princesses did not start off as hostages but came to be viewed by chroniclers as such because of the delay in marrying them, and because King John made considerable use of hostageship in other agreements.

Another questionable case is that of Philippa, daughter of Guy, count of Flanders, who was handed over to, or taken by, Philip IV of France in 1294. Her captivity was as a result of the arrangement to marry her to Edward, the heir presumptive to the English throne,<sup>10</sup> an arguably treacherous deal on the part of Count Guy. The primary purpose of her captivity seems to have been to stop her marrying contrary to Philip's wishes and interests, and Philippa was held by Philip until her (premature) death.<sup>11</sup> This captivity may well have been intended to put pressure on her father, but there is no contemporary evidence that Philippa was acknowledged by the count of Flanders to be a hostage. Hostageship is alluded to in the text of Kervyn de Lettenhove's *Histoire de Flandre*, but the term appears to be used rather loosely, and it should be noted that neither the complaint by count Guy concerning Philip's actions, which is cited as authority for Philippa's having been a hostage,<sup>12</sup> nor the *Annales Gandenses*<sup>13</sup> characterise her as a hostage, nor does the *Chronique Normande*,<sup>14</sup> and nor do most secondary sources.<sup>15</sup> The *Annales Gandenses* portray the captivity as the result of a trick, luring Guy to France and then imprisoning him and members of his family, until, 'under compulsion,' he allows Philippa to be brought to the French court. When Philippa arrives in Paris, she is made a captive. It does not sound like a consensual hostage agreement in Kosto's sense, and it is roundly condemned by the annalist.<sup>16</sup> It may be that Philippa's presence was presented as being for the purposes of 'education,'<sup>17</sup> or could have been dressed up as being connected with Philip's role as her godfather.<sup>18</sup> Descriptions of Philippa's situation group around two poles: cruel (and probably unwarranted) captivity on the one hand and honourable treatment (which might be consistent with something like wardship as much as hostageship) on the other.<sup>19</sup> Taking all of this information together, there would appear to be a strong case against a definite assertion that Philippa was a hostage in Kosto's sense.<sup>20</sup>

Two Scots' cases raise further doubts. Marjorie Bruce, daughter of Robert Bruce is listed as a hostage, on the basis of a 1297 demand that she be handed over. It is, however, unclear that she was ever handed over as a hostage, though clearly she was subject to some other form of captivity in England from 1306, having been captured in Scotland, probably after the battle of Methven.<sup>21</sup> The imprisonment on Inchholm of the mother of Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, in 1431, by James I King of Scots, could be argued to be distinct from, or more than, hostageship. Macdonald and his mother claimed joint control of the earldom of Ross, and she was treated as an independent power when she was invited to the Parliament at Inverness in 1428, and then locked up. While she may have been held as a guarantee of her son's good behaviour, therefore, her captivity might also be explained on grounds of personal culpability for opposition to James.<sup>22</sup> Bower, for example, mentions 'custody,' rather than hostageship in relation to this woman.<sup>23</sup>

These examples show that some of the female hostages on Kosto's list may be questionable. Also open to further examination are his claims relating to trends in female confinement over the medieval period. Kosto argues that there was a 'striking' shift towards the use of female hostages from the eleventh century; use of female hostages was, thereafter, not a last resort, and gender was generally not a 'pressing issue.' This change, he suggests, is connected with changes in the use of hostageship itself, with a move from a family-based system, in which daughters were granted not as hostages, but as wives, to a more representative, bureaucratic system.<sup>24</sup> There are a number of problems with his thesis.

### **A Striking Increase?**

Clearly, the fact that some of the medieval women and girls in his list might not best be described as hostages is not enough to negate Kosto's case for there having been more female hostages from 1000 than before that date, particularly when one factors in other well-documented cases (and arguable cases) which are not on the list.<sup>25</sup> One might consider in this context, for example, Matilda, wife of King Stephen,<sup>26</sup> Alice de Huntingfield, the daughter of William de Huntingfield,<sup>27</sup> the daughter of Alan of Galloway,<sup>28</sup> one of William Longespee's daughters,<sup>29</sup> Agnes, daughter of Gerard Ridel,<sup>30</sup> the wives and children of Goronwy and Einion Fychan,<sup>31</sup> the eldest daughter of Gilbert de Clare,<sup>32</sup> Anna, regent of Epiros,<sup>33</sup> Mary Douglas,<sup>34</sup> Jeanne, daughter of Charles 'the Bad' of Navarre;<sup>35</sup> and 'the wife of Mcarcenaydy.'<sup>36</sup> Taken together with other issues such as the comparative volume of sources in the earlier and later periods, and the 'King John blip' to be discussed below, however, the debatable nature of some of Kosto's examples of female hostageship begins to cast doubt upon his conclusion as to the increase in female hostages after 1000.

## Over-Representations

Militating against an argument of an increase in female hostageship across Europe and throughout the later medieval centuries is the heavy representation in any list of instances of female hostageship of one kingdom and one king. Kings of England are recipients in twenty-nine instances out of Kosto's sixty-six (with 'the English' and Edward 'the Black Prince' also featuring, as well as an English earl and Faulkes de Bréauté) and King John is the recipient in twenty of the sixty-six cases listed. It seems arguable that the reign of John (or perhaps his reign and the minority of Henry III) should be seen as something of a 'blip' in terms of domestic hostage-taking, making the use of women look more striking, more normal than it actually was across Europe and across the later medieval period.<sup>37</sup>

There is a need for more attention to differences across jurisdictions and over time. Note the contrast, for example, between incidence of female hostage-taking by kings of England, and by kings of France, with only one, rather shaky, example on Kosto's list of a female hostage taken by a French king.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps even more strikingly, Gaelic Ireland, a culture in which great importance was placed on hostageship,<sup>39</sup> contributes only one 'internal' example of a female hostage on the list, the wife of Thomas Og Maguire.<sup>40</sup> There is a distinct falling-off in the numbers of female hostages from the fourteenth century onwards. While there are thirty-three cases on Kosto's list from the thirteenth century, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries together produce only fourteen. Given that large numbers of male hostages were taken at this time—particularly in connection with the enmities between England and France and England and Scotland—this falling off suggests a growing gap between numbers of male and female hostages, which is worthy of remark and examination.

In England at least, the overt requiring of hostages (of either sex) from noble subjects became increasingly rare after the minority of Henry III, with financial bonds and other methods of ensuring noble loyalty usually being preferred.<sup>41</sup> From the fourteenth century, a large number of hostages were 'international' in nature, and females were seldom if ever used in this context.<sup>42</sup> The increasing connection between hostageship and a masculine concept of honour is likely to be relevant in this unwillingness to use women.<sup>43</sup>

## The Unimportance of Gender?

Another aspect of Kosto's conclusions on female hostages which might be questioned is the suggestion that, in the later Middle Ages, gender became unimportant in the selection of hostages. While being female may not have been an absolute bar to hostageship, however, it would be very peculiar if gender were not a relevant factor in any important aspect of a world in which legal and social rules continued to be structured around definite ideas

of the roles and rights of males and females. Furthermore, Kosto's own list is far from demonstrating that hostage-takers would just as soon have a female as a male.

In a number of cases of female hostageship noted by Kosto, it is tolerably clear or likely that there was not a male available who was related in the same degree to the person against whom security was being taken. Baldwin II, king of Jerusalem did not have any sons, nor did Eudo de Porhoët, nor did André de Vitré, nor did Robert Bruce.<sup>44</sup> Other probable 'no brother' cases are those of the daughter of Jon earl of Orkney, Mary Douglas, and the daughters of Pedro 'the Cruel' of Castile.<sup>45</sup> Alexander Macdonald, Lord of the Isles probably did not have a close male relation to offer the King of Scots in 1431, so that, if his mother was a hostage, she might be seen as a hostage of last resort.<sup>46</sup>

In some cases, the choice or acceptance of a female hostage is explained by something other than an indifference to gender. For example, Philippa of Flanders (whose hostageship or otherwise was debated above) was one of many children of count Guy, including several sons.<sup>47</sup> The fact that she was singled out as the child Philip the Fair wished to have under his control is, however, not a sign of his indifference to gender in hostages/captives, but the result of his wish to prevent this particular child from being married contrary to his wishes. In the reign of Edward II, Scots extracting pay-offs from communities in the north of England wishing to avoid destructive raiding accepted English women as substitutes for their hostage husbands, while the men went home to raise the money promised by their community to the invaders, but which had not been paid. This was clearly a last resort, employed only when there appeared to be no other way of raising the promised sums.<sup>48</sup>

To return to that enthusiastic taker of hostages, King John of England, it should be noted that, although he did take female hostages from his subordinates, his main criterion was that the hostage should be the heir/ess to land and/or titles. Multiple hostages were demanded at the time of the return to good will of Gilbert fitz Reinfrey in 1216, but, although daughters were included, either alone or as alternatives, it was stipulated in all but one of these cases that the daughters were to be their fathers' heiresses.<sup>49</sup> Given the common law's preference for the eldest male child,<sup>50</sup> it is not surprising to find that such hostages were the first choice. The same pattern can be seen after John's reign,<sup>51</sup> and rules of succession were relevant in other jurisdictions. Margaret of Passava was an acceptable hostage, as heiress presumptive to lands in Morea, and the daughters of Pedro the Cruel were acceptable hostages to the Black Prince, since female succession to the crown was possible in Castile, unlike, say, France.<sup>52</sup> Had there been a brother, they would have been less attractive as hostages. In two cases, females were held only until a male relation was produced.<sup>53</sup>

The cases in which a daughter or female relation is given as well as males could be taken to show that gender was not important in choice of hostages.



In some cases, however, they may have been used to bolster up security provided by a relatively remote male hostage.<sup>54</sup> In others, there might be a desire to ensure an immediate replacement, should the male hostage die, or the taking of multiple hostages might represent particularly harsh terms, increasing the pressure on the subject by threatening his own dynastic future more completely. Few cases involve taking both a daughter and a son of the same individual grantor, and it can be argued that females do, generally, appear to be the last resort within an inheritance group.

The property-based preference for male hostages would be reinforced by the increasing connection in the fourteenth century between the status of prisoner of war or hostage with concepts of chivalry and honour. Hostage relationships became increasingly regulated, with notarial declarations of obligation, replete with oaths sworn on the honour of the hostage. Women were not seen as fitting into this world in the same way as men-at-arms.<sup>55</sup> Later twelfth century 'international obligations' backed by hostages used only males, as in the case of the nineteen hostages given by William the Lion for the Treaty of Falaise 1174, and the hostages for the ransom of Richard I.<sup>56</sup> There appears to have been no question of asking for, or accepting, women as hostages for the ransom of John II of France in 1360.<sup>57</sup> Likewise the lists of Scots hostages for the ransom of David Bruce in 1357, and James I in 1423 included only males.<sup>58</sup>

Kosto makes an important general argument that there is a move in the later Middle Ages from hostages being connected to family relationships to hostages as representatives.<sup>59</sup> He links this to the increase which he sees in the use of female hostages. It is not clear, however, that the female hostages whom he lists were more 'representative' than 'family' in character. Most are still close family members of an individual obligee. This difference in the species of hostageship in which one is likely to see males and females is worthy of note.

### **Informality, Fluidity, Vagueness**

Kosto's definition can be taken as a core meaning for 'hostage.' There was and is, however, a considerable penumbra around that core, containing cases in which it is clear that a person was being held as a means of putting pressure upon another, to do or not to do something, but the arrangement cannot definitely be said to have been entered into voluntarily nor to have been labelled 'a hostage arrangement' by both parties.<sup>60</sup> The existence of this penumbra is due, in part, to a lack of evidence as to the beginning of the captivity, in part to the fact that the several parties in a transaction might simply disagree as to whether or not it was a hostage arrangement, and in part to the possibility that contemporaries' idea of hostageship might not map exactly onto Kosto's definition, or be neatly differentiated from other cognate institutions. The different justifications for confining females might be conceived of as overlapping.<sup>61</sup> For example,

one chronicle dealing with Margaret and Isabella of Scotland treats transfer as a hostage as not inconsistent with being transferred for marriage, and this running together of female hostageship and marriage can still be seen in the sixteenth century.<sup>62</sup>

Females might be kept on a number of different pretexts, with some colour of consent by their male relatives, and with a range of motives which might include the desire to pressure those relations. Thus Richard I hung on to Alice of France long after it was clear that he would never marry her, keeping her as an informal hostage or bargaining chip in relations with her original country: an asset capable of being used in different ways, depending on developing international situation.<sup>63</sup> He and John used their possession of Eleanor of Brittany (who was, perhaps, at one time an acknowledged hostage) to attempt to exert a degree of control in Brittany,<sup>64</sup> and the 'Damsel of Cyprus,' having been offered to Richard I as a hostage, was retained for years without overt justification in a manner which could be classed as war booty or wardship.<sup>65</sup>

Because women and marriage alliances were used to attempt to smooth over already troubled relations, a woman's position could become hostage-like if she did marry and relations between the relevant countries soured further, though her confinement might be at the behest of the original granting party. Joan de Valence and Maria de Monthermer were, respectively, cousin and granddaughter of Edward I. Both were married to powerful Scots (John Comyn junior of Badenoch and Duncan, fourth earl of Fife) with a view to binding these men to English allegiance. When their husbands turned against English kings, the women were subject to confinement in England.<sup>66</sup> This taking charge of wife (and, in Joan's case, progeny) is likely to have been calculated to bring pressure to bear upon the king of England's opponents.

### Shifting Behaviour

In fourteenth and fifteenth century England, women were more likely to be taken captive without any question of consent than to be hostages. Thus, for example, after the risings against him, Edward II confined the apparently blameless families of his noble opponents, such as Margaret, wife of Hugh Audley and Elizabeth de Clare, wife of Roger Damory and the wife, daughters and mother of Roger Mortimer,<sup>67</sup> Henry IV imprisoned the wife, daughter and grandchildren of Owain Glyn Dŵr, who was at large,<sup>68</sup> and, in the Wars of the Roses period, there was confinement of women whose husbands were attainted.<sup>69</sup>

This confinement of women without colour of consent showed a marked difference from developments in male hostageship. Formality, documentation and ideas of due process were evident in the male experience, while informality and vagueness blanketed a number of periods of female confinement, some of them long and still mysterious.

## Conclusion

As an academic from the legal side of legal history, I appreciate the impulse towards accurate definition and documentation of the refining of concepts. In one sense, Kosto is quite right to warn against a tendency to collapse different uses of hostage into one idea.<sup>70</sup> Clearly, a distinction can be made between a medieval treaty hostage and a hostage in a modern terrorist operation. On the other hand, however, precise definition of a set of practices on the borderline between law and politics, with multiple origins, multiple purposes and considerable development over time, may be unrealistic. The fact that it is difficult to define hostageship and agree on application of the definition may, however, be instructive, and can serve to make us consider whether hostageship can—or should—be pinned down with precision. It suggests that ‘hostage’ was probably never a completely watertight and separate status, applicable in all circumstances and times and to all people.

As with definitions, narratives of ‘fall and rise’ and ‘transformation’ often need qualification, and the trends in use of female hostages over the medieval centuries and across Europe seem more complex than Kosto suggests, with ebbs and flows in their use, contrasts with some developments in the use of male hostages and differences in practice in different territories and situations.<sup>71</sup> Far from not being ‘pressing,’ gender came, over the late medieval period, to be a very important matter in determining the manner in which a person was likely to be confined.

## Notes

- 1 MPCM II, 525; *Chron. Ed.I and II*, 1, 31.
- 2 Kosto, Table 4.2, s.a. 1209.
- 3 MPCM, II, 525; Wendover, III, 227; Coventry, I, 19.
- 4 *Foed.*, 1 (i), 103; James Holt, ed., *Magna Carta*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), clause 59; RLC I, 137, 144b, 157.
- 5 *Melrose*, fols 28v, 54r; *Annales Monastici*, III, 398; Andrew Wyntoun, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, ed. François Joseph Amours, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1903–14) book VII, chapter 8; David Scott, *History of Scotland* (Westminster, 1728), 161, 164; David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, *Annals of Scotland*, 3 vols (Edinburgh: Constable and Fairbairn, 1819), I, 152; *Gervase II*, 103; Wilfred Lewis Warren, *King John*, second edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 83, 193, 139, 202, 275; Douglas Owen, *William the Lion 1143–1214: Kingship and Culture* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1997), 103; Edward Stones, *Anglo–Scottish Relations 1174–1328 Some Selected Documents* (London: Nelson, 1965), xlviii, xlviii, 20. Keeping them away and unmarried was seen by the Scots as a grievance, supporting the idea that they did not see the princesses as hostages: *Melrose* fol. 40r; Dick Howard, *Magna Carta Text and Commentary*, revised edition (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 51. See also the recently discovered copy of a letter of King John, outlining what are said to be the terms of his agreement with William the Lion concerning Margaret and Isabella, and dealing with their marriage, not suggesting that they were hostages: David Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, second edition (London: Penguin, 2015), 238, 473–4; TNA E 164/27, f. 137–137v.

- 6 For profitable explorations of vagueness from jurisprudential and linguistic points of view, see Steven Piantadosi et al., 'The Communicative Function of Ambiguity in Language,' *Cognition* 122 (2012): 280–91; Timothy Endicott, *Vagueness in Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 7 Kosto, 9, 84.
- 8 Kosto, 5, notes some difficulties, but see Gwen Seabourne, *Imprisoning Medieval Women* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), chapter 7 and Appendix for the argument that medieval ideas of what was voluntary are so markedly different from our own that we must be careful in giving importance to this distinction.
- 9 One of his cases may be fictitious: Table 4.2: Gunnhild, from 1002.
- 10 Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (London: Methuen, 1988), 388; Franz Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines de la Guerre de Cent Ans: Philippe le Bel en Flandre* (Paris, 1896), 139–43.
- 11 David Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders* (London: Longman, 1992), 187, Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines*, 509–10.
- 12 Joseph Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Histoire de Flandre vol 2 Epoque communale* (Brussels: Vromant, 1847), 371, 566.
- 13 Hilda Johnson, ed., *Annales Gandenses* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 8 (hereafter *Annales Gandenses*); Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines*, 144; Auguste Molinier and Emile Molinier, eds, *Chronique normande du XIVe siècle* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire de France, 1882), 1 (hereafter *Chronique normande*.)
- 14 *Chronique normande*, 2.
- 15 Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 7 vols (Brussels: Maurice Lamertin, 1902–32) I, 370; J.F. Verbruggen, *The Battle of the Golden Spurs (Courtrai 1302)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 14; Franz Funck-Brentano, ed., *Chronique Artesienne (1295–1304)* (Paris, 1899), 8, 10.
- 16 Guy and his wife are said to have been deeply offended by Philip's conduct: *Annales Gandenses*, 8.
- 17 Nicholas, *Medieval Flanders*, 187
- 18 Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines*, 144, 146, noting the precedent of Philip Augustus and the daughters of Baldwin of Constantinople.
- 19 Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines*, 146.
- 20 Note, although this does not rule out hostageship, that the holding of Philippa did not keep Guy to his allegiance to Philip: Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*; I, 370, 371; Funck-Brentano, *Les Origines*, 190.
- 21 Sir Francis Palgrave, *Documents and Records Illustrating the History of Scotland and the Transactions between the Crowns of Scotland and England 21 Henry III–35 Edward I* (London, 1837), I, nos. CLV, CLIX, CX; Bain, II, no. 910, III, 1851, V, 492. Marjorie and other women of the Bruce family and entourage were held in England from 1306 to 1314.
- 22 R.W. Munro and Jean Munro, 'Macdonald Family, c. 1300–1500,' in ODNB, Colin Matthew and Brian Harrison, eds, 60 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael Brown, *James I* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1994); *Peerage*, XI, 149–51.
- 23 Bower VIII, 229, 262.
- 24 Kosto, 21, 85, 92.
- 25 See the cases of: Matilda, wife of King Stephen (1141: David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen 1135–1154* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 176, 186); Alice de Huntingfield, the daughter of William de Huntingfield, (1203: *Rot. Pat.*, 34); Alan of Galloway's daughter (1212: Bain, I, no. 574); one of William Longespee's daughters (1233: CR 1231–4, 233); Agnes, daughter of Gerard Ridel (1237: CPR 1232–47, 193); the wives and children of Goronwy and Einion Fychan, (1240s, proposal only: David Walker, *Medieval Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge

- University Press, 1990), 108); John Goronwy Edwards, ed., *Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales* (Cardiff: University Board Press, 1935), 22 (hereafter *Cal. Ancient Correspondence*); the eldest daughter of Gilbert de Clare (1268, proposal only: CPR 1266–72, 246); Anna, regent of Epiros (1338: John Schmitt, ed., *The Chronicle of Morea* (Groningen: Bouma, 1967), 574 (hereafter *Chronicle of Morea*); Mary Douglas (1352: CPR 1354–8, 570); Jeanne, daughter of Charles ‘the Bad’ of Navarre (1380s: Michael Jones, ‘Between France and England: Jeanne de Navarre, duchess of Brittany and Queen of England (1368–1437)’ in *Between France and England*, ed. Michael Jones (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 3); ‘the wife of Mccardcennaydy’ (1429: Brendan Smith, *Crisis and Survival in Late Medieval Ireland: the English of Louth and their Neighbours 1330–1450* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013), 206.)
- 26 A short-term hostage in 1141: Crouch, *Stephen*, 176, 186.
  - 27 1203: *Rot. Pat.*, 34.
  - 28 1212: Bain, I, no. 574).
  - 29 1233: CR 1231–4, 233.
  - 30 1237: CPR 1232–47, 193).
  - 31 1240s, proposal only: Walker, *Medieval Wales*, 108; *Cal. Ancient Correspondence*, 22.
  - 32 1268, proposal only: CPR 1266–72, 246.
  - 33 1338: *Chronicle of Morea*, 574.
  - 34 1352: CPR 1354–8, 570.
  - 35 1380s: Jones, ‘Between,’ 3.
  - 36 1429: Smith, *Crisis*, 206.
  - 37 John’s heavy use of hostages: see Holt, *Magna Carta*, 82; James Holt, *The Northerners* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 86; Warren, *John*, 181. A full list of John’s hostages would show a large majority of cases in which females were not taken; see, e.g., *Rot. Lit. Pat.*, 55.
  - 38 Philippa of Flanders, above.
  - 39 See Edel Bhreathnach, ‘Perceptions of Kingship in Early Medieval Irish Vernacular Literature,’ in *Lordship in Medieval Ireland*, eds. Linda Doran and James Lyttleton (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 21–46.
  - 40 William Hennessy, ed., *Annals of Ulster* (Blackrock: Edmund Burke, 1998). The Maguires’ dynastic struggles at this point may explain why, atypically, this female hostage was taken: see, e.g. Theodore Moody et al., *A New History of Ireland: Maps, Genealogies, Lists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 148, 216.
  - 41 Sean Cunningham, *Henry VII* (London: Routledge, 2005), 127, 215–7.
  - 42 There is little use of female hostages between belligerents in this period, though they were occasionally used to guarantee obligations between allies: see Peter Russell, *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 1, 53, 66–8, 165, 171.
  - 43 Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 43.
  - 44 Hans Mayer, ‘The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem: English Impact on the East,’ *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 39 (1985): 139–47, 137; Judith Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 32, 45, 46, 159–74; Pierre Le Baud, *Histoire de Bretagne* (Paris, 1638), 201; Pierre Le Baud, ed., *Chroniques de Vitre*, (Paris, 1638), 35; Arthur Bertrand de Brouillon, ed., *La Maison de Laval* (Paris, 1895–1903), V no. 3200; Howden, IV, 7.
  - 45 Richard Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland 1070–1230* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 175; John of Fordun, *Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon*, ed. Walter Goodall, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1759), II, 274; RRS ii no 522; *Peerage* II, 475; CPR 1354–8, 570; Russell, *Intervention*, 12, 173.

- 46 Munro, 'Macdonald family,' *Peerage* XI, 149–51.
- 47 *Annales Gandenses*, ix.
- 48 TNA: SC 8/89/4438; SC 8/70/3459; KB27/250 m. 88d; Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 47.
- 49 *Rot. Fin.*, 570–1; *Rot. Ch.*, 221b. The unexplained exception is the daughter of Richard de Copeland.
- 50 Medieval property and inheritance systems privileged (legitimate) males over females: see, e.g. Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 48–9.
- 51 See CR 1231–4, 247. When hostages were required from the keepers of Irish castles during the minority of Henry III, either a son or a daughter or the next nearest relation was acceptable (though sons are first in the list of possibilities): *Patent Rolls* 1216–25, 264.
- 52 Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 48.
- 53 Kosto, Table 4.2: Matilda, daughter of Simon fitz Walter and Agatha Trusebut.
- 54 Kosto, Table 4.2: Barisone of Arborea, Hugh Rufus.
- 55 Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 49.
- 56 Allan Orr Anderson, *Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers* (London: Nutt, 1908), 258, 262; *GHS*, vol. 1, 94–9; Howden, RS 51.3:215–16; Kosto, 171–4.
- 57 TNA E 30/153.
- 58 *Foed.*, III, 372–4, V, 711, 712, 724, 727; Bain, III, 434.
- 59 Kosto, 77, 92.
- 60 The idea of 'hostage-like' captivity can be seen in the transfer of members of the English nobility to Normandy '*velut obsides*,' following William I's conquest: William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, eds. Ralph Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 2.28, Kosto, 25.
- 61 See Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, discussing confinement associated with marriage, wardship and 'family guilt': Kosto, chapter 3, also points out the similarities between youth hostageship and fosterage, and, at 69, conflation of hostages with exiles and ambassadors.
- 62 *Annales Monastici* IV, 398; Pascual de Gayangos, ed., *Calendar of State Papers: Spain* (London: HMSO, 1873), vol. 3 part 1, 29: the daughter of the Count of Pitigliano.
- 63 *Gervase* I, 346; Douglas Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 85; Howden, III, 187, 306, Jim Bradbury, *Philip Augustus King of France 1180–1223* (London: Longman, 1998), 109, 119.
- 64 Gwen Seabourne, 'Eleanor of Brittany and her Treatment by King John and Henry III,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 51 (2007): 73–110, 82–4.
- 65 *GHS* II, 165; Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 21–2, 62. She was taken following Richard I's defeat of her father in Cyprus, and was treated in a sense as Richard's ward in that she was kept with female members of the royal family. Those looking at other jurisdictions have noted the vague position of some female 'hostages': see Jonathan Shephard, 'Manners maketh Romans? Young barbarians at the emperor's court,' in *Byzantine Style: Religion and Civilisation*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 150.
- 66 Joan ordered to come to London, under guard, with her son and two daughters: CCR 1296–1302, 204; CPR 1292–1301, 337. Maria's stay in England after Duncan's defection to Bruce claimed to be by English coercion: *Cal. Pap. Let.*, I, 30; Bain, III, no. 8, no 566, Bain, V, no 463, TNA C 70/1 m.4. *Foed.* I (ii), 1002. RRS V, 354–5; CPR 1317–21, 415; *Foed.* II.1. p. 416. Bain, III, nos 1312, 1333, 1340, 1341, 1360, 1445; CCR 1341–3, 97; TNA E 43/271, E 43/621. CPR 1343–5, 471.
- 67 Adam de Murimuth, *Chronica sui Temporis* (London: English Historical Society, 1846), 38; Edward Bond, ed., *Chronica Monasterii de Melsa*, 3 vols (London,



- 1866–8), II, 343 (hereafter *Melsa*); CCR 1313–23, 403; CCR 1318–23, 428, 440, 582, 603–4, 624; CCR 1323–7, 87, 88–9, 95, 238; 533, 590, 624; CCR 1327–30, 76; CCR 1337–9, 501; CPR 1321–4, 77, 406; *Cal. Mem. Rolls 1326–1327*, 218, 289, 311–12, 336, 363, 440; John Glover, ed., *Le Livere de Reis de Brittainne e Le Livere de Reis de Engleterre* (London: Longman, 1865), 345.
- 68 Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 30, 33; Walker, *Medieval Wales*, 173; Henry Riley, ed., *Chronica Monasterii Sancti Albani, Thomae Walsingham, quondam monachi S. Albani Historia Anglicana*, 2 vols (London: Green, 1863–4), HA, II, 230, 253. Ernest Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 65; James Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV*, 4 vols (London: Longmans Green, 1884–98) III, 266, 271 n; Adam of Usk, *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk AD 1377–1421*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson (Felinfach: Llanarch Press, 1990), 167; Robert Rees Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 311; Frederick Devon, ed., *Issues of the Exchequer from King Henry III to King Henry VI* (London, 1837), 321, 327.
- 69 Seabourne, *Imprisoning*, 42–3.
- 70 Kosto, 5.
- 71 Contrast, for example, Henry II's practice in relation to Wales and Scotland: *Gervase I*, 165; Wilfred Lewis Warren, *Henry II* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), 119, 163, 167; Gerald of Wales, *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*, ed. John Sherren Brewer, 8 vols (London: Longman, 1861–91), VI, 143, VIII, p. 165; *Melsa*, I, 256; *Annales Monastici* II, 338–9; J. Williams ab Ithel, ed., *Annales Cambriae*, (London: Longman, 1860), 50; *Melrose*, 79; Howden I, 240, II, 80; PR 10 Richard 1, 108; Richard Howlett, ed., *Historia Rerum Anglicarum* (London: Longman, 1884–89), 491. There remains room for much more work in comparison and differentiation of the use of female hostages (in a wide or narrow sense) in different medieval jurisdictions.

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## 8 The Princesses Who Might Have Been Hostages

### The Custody and Marriages of Margaret and Isabella of Scotland, 1209–1220s

*Katherine Weikert*

In 1209, stemming from the Treaty of Norham, Scottish hostages were sent south into England. Margaret and Isabella, daughters of King William of Scotland, went along, too.<sup>1</sup> Both daughters were intended to marry sons of King John, with the elder Margaret to wed the future Henry III before 1217. By 1215, no such marriages had taken place though the daughters were still in England, and they were subsequently mentioned in the Magna Carta. In 1220, Alexander demanded the promised marriages of his sisters, still in England. Finally, in 1221 Margaret was married to Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar of England, and Isabella was married to Roger (III) Bigod in 1225. Both princesses, promised to possible kings, were married below their rank more than ten years after the promise of these positions as a condition of their holding by King John.

Contemporary and later medieval records as well as modern scholars seem uncertain in their terminology for the status of the princesses. While Roger of Wendover and, consequently, Matthew Paris refer to them as hostages to King John,<sup>2</sup> the annals of Dunstable do not.<sup>3</sup> In his recent volume on medieval hostageship, Adam Kosto considers the sisters hostages.<sup>4</sup> Their status has been much debated: were they hostages or undefined honoured guests in the manner of fosterage as their purpose in the English court was ostensibly to make marriages to the sons of John?<sup>5</sup> Their circumstance, as pointed out by Gwen Seabourne, makes complicated the idea of firmly classifying such persons as hostages in the medieval world; Margaret and Isabella might be best termed, as Seabourne suggests, as ‘quasi-hostages,’<sup>6</sup> and indeed the recently-discovered text of the Treaty of Norham does not refer to Margaret and Isabella as hostages, which may momentarily dam some of the debate as to their status.<sup>7</sup> However their situation might be legally defined either in the medieval or the modern world, the Scottish princesses were contractual parts of a peace agreement, given in tandem with other hostages, and expressly held by the king for the purpose of their marriages. In many ways, the purpose and experience of Margaret and Isabella’s holding by the king is functionally similar

to many other high-level hostageships<sup>8</sup> and deserves treatment in its own right, not only for the purpose of exploring hostageships but also with the particular view of the female custody as explicit marriage fodder in the medieval world. Previous works have barely considered the sisters' important roles in the diplomatic manoeuvres and actions of Scotland and England. Indeed, their role as marriage fodder to the English kings for the purpose of shoring up the Anglo-Scottish alliance has long been neglected, despite recognition that their father's previous attempt at creating marriage contracts for them in attempts to ally with the king of France was a part of John's reasons for the terms of the Treaty of Norham.<sup>9</sup> The recent volume on the reign of Alexander II,<sup>10</sup> for example, makes only occasional mention of the princesses in any context, neglecting not only the women's lives but also their political importance in the spotlight of a very contentious period of Anglo-Scottish relations. This volume focuses on the many 'traditional' ways of viewing a reign and a kingship: via the military manoeuvres, diplomacy, papal and ecclesiastic relationships, and so forth. All are indeed very valid ways to view a reign and a period, but in neglecting any aspect of the princesses' role in these negotiations, the overview is one of a masculinised world in which Margaret and Isabella were mere tokens instead of a significant part of diplomacy and negotiation between Scotland and England.

The curious facts of the princesses' detention by the English kings outlines a feature made a number of times in this volume, that of the fluidity and nuanced nature of hostageship, but in this case their role in custody had a specific purpose: marriage. Ultimately, neither princess ended up with their intended husbands, the sons of John. Modern scholarship tends to note in brief that the princesses were married to earls, but there is a crucial point that this statement fails to make: Margaret and Isabella did *not* marry earls, they married men who *became* earls. To Scotland, this could have easily been perceived as an insult. To England, this must have been seen as an expedient way to reward loyal men whilst putting Scotland in what England might have seen as its place as a vassal state; indeed, by the end of the Anglo-Scottish conflict of 1215–17 Scotland is seen as being 'firmly put in their place'<sup>11</sup> by England and these marriages are a very much part of this worldview. Finally, these marriages note an experience very similar to women of the upper ranks of society and one that fits a much larger pattern: that of women being made available for political marriages, particularly women who were political or social hostages. In fact, there are possibly three known women who moved from a hostageship to John into marriage.<sup>12</sup> This may be a trend indicative of the 'King John blip'<sup>13</sup> of his reign, or an indication that perhaps the state of being a high-status *woman* in confinement, and thus available for utilization for advantageous marriages, trumped the status of being a high-status *hostage* who might not expect to be given in marriage as a part of a surety agreement. This

chapter seeks then to not only illuminate the lives and situations of Margaret and Isabella through their eventual marriages, but to restore to them their important roles particularly through their confinement and marriage negotiations for them undertaken by the powerful men around them from 1209 into the 1220s. This chapter will further explore the position of Margaret and Isabella as honoured guests or hostages and their possible change from the former to the latter after the ostensible failure of the Treaty of Norham in 1217, and the larger questions of why we might or might not view Margaret and Isabella as hostages—or if that even makes a difference.

## Negotiations and Marriages

The naming of both daughters as a part of the treaty specifically included their marriage instructions: Margaret and Isabella were to marry the young Henry, heir to John, and Richard, in whatever combination best worked when accounting for any potential deaths between the four of them.<sup>14</sup> Although no mention of Alexander's marriage was made in the known text of the treaty, a later charter of 1212 confirmed that the future Alexander II would be married 'at John's entire discretion' within six years of 8 February 1212;<sup>15</sup> this is taken as a probable promise to John's daughter Joan, only two years old at the time.<sup>16</sup> Relatively quickly after the handing over of his daughters, three of the legitimate children of William the Lion were promised in marriage to legitimate children of John. This certainly was a political manoeuvre for John, and the terms of handing over his two daughters for marriage has been read as one of the 'humiliating feature[s]' of the Treaty.<sup>17</sup>

But more may have been on William's mind than this; the marriage of his daughter to the presumed heir of England may have ultimately provided some leverage for the Scottish crown or at the very least a commensurate rank for the woman. The king's own marriage, arranged in part by Henry II, was to Ermengarde, daughter of Richard, vicomte of Beaumont, who was an illegitimate son of a daughter of Henry I. Jessica Nelson rightly notes this choice of a bride by Henry II was one with a lineage that was 'good, but not too good.'<sup>18</sup> Initial reaction in Scotland to this proposed marriage was negative with the match seen as disparaging to the king.<sup>19</sup> The marriage to Ermengarde was not without benefit to William, though, as Henry II returned to him Edinburgh Castle as a part of Ermengarde's dower<sup>20</sup> and Ermengarde ultimately proved diplomatically adept at later occasions. The circumstances surrounding his own marriage may have been on William's mind at the point of handing over his daughters, as well as considering the potential for future political relationships between the kings of England and Scotland: a Scottish princess as an English queen might have provided a key point of intercession in future negotiations between the two kings.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, from 1209 the two sisters were taken to England. E.L.G. Stones made a reconstruction of the turbulent years after 1209 for Margaret and Isabella<sup>22</sup> and accounts in these years allow for somewhat of a portrayal

of Margaret and Isabella's custody by the English. The first notice comes from the Pipe Roll of 11 John (1210x1211), wherein one Geoffrey fitz Piers of Essex or Hertford pays a hefty fine of ten goshawks in order to *not* take the princesses in wardship.<sup>23</sup> The ensuing years through to 1214 outline a series of movements for Margaret and Isabella,<sup>24</sup> including a period from 1212–14 when the princesses were most active, or at least best recorded: the pair were at Windsor, Nottingham, Winchester, Waltham, Winchester again, Rochester (where they may have received messages from their father),<sup>25</sup> Temple near Dover, Corfe Castle, London, and Windsor again.<sup>26</sup> As Bain notes, it seems that Margaret and Isabella were then with the royal court, following its rapid movements.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the company they keep explicitly included the queen herself, Isabella of Angoulême,<sup>28</sup> and John's famed niece, Eleanor of Brittany.<sup>29</sup>

The supplies provisioned for Margaret and Isabella were also commensurate to daughters of a king travelling with a royal court. John provided for the sisters' luxurious clothing, including capes and robes lined with rabbit fur, miniver, lambskin and deerskin, hoods also lined with fur, capes of cambric, and light summer shoes; dresses were made in dark green for the sisters along with hoods and capes in russet.<sup>30</sup> Their entourage was not forgotten, receiving robes (light green for the maids), hoods, capes, and rain hoods.<sup>31</sup> On one possibly memorable occasion, the king provided for Margaret and Isabella two seams of fish, fifty pounds of almonds and one hundred pounds of figs for their use whilst at Windsor in 1212 or 1213.<sup>32</sup> Margaret and Isabella were well-dressed, well-fed, well-provisioned and generally in good company.

In fact, it is the company of Eleanor of Brittany that may give us the greatest suggestion as to Margaret and Isabella's status within the royal household at that time. Eleanor, as *suo jure* duchess of Brittany as well as a daughter of John's older brother, represented to John both in her person and (previously) in her deceased brother a potential threat to the throne of England. Eleanor's captivity was a probably a strategy to keep Brittany quiet and Eleanor from agitating either for the duchy or the throne, alongside an expectation to potentially make a marriage match that was most favourable to the English throne.<sup>33</sup> Eleanor's captivity is one of the better-documented and well-known female hostageships in the period; indeed, it has been established that outside of the obvious fact that she was not actually free, her hostageship in many ways resembled typical life as a noblewoman in the early thirteenth century.<sup>34</sup> Eleanor's hostageship, in fact, has been referred to rather politely as a 'comfortable confinement'.<sup>35</sup>

The amount of travel that Margaret and Isabella did with the English court in the early years of their custody also flags up their political use. Although most of the money of the treaty's terms had been paid by 1211, all of the hostages, including the princesses, remained in England.<sup>36</sup> In February 1212 the agreement in regards to Alexander's marriage was drawn up, mediated by Queen Ermengarde;<sup>37</sup> on 4 March 1212, Alexander was

knighted by John at Clerkenwell.<sup>38</sup> This date may correspond to a flurry activity undertaken by Margaret and Isabella in March of the same year including travel from Nottingham to Winchester and the use of John's horses and groomsmen in the process (to the tune of £19 13s 6½d).<sup>39</sup> The knighting of the heir to the Scottish throne was undoubtedly a large and grand affair, to say nothing of the political connotations of the king of England knighting the heir of Scotland, further emphasizing the state of political relations between the two. If Margaret and Isabella had been present, they were certainly a part of this showy presentation and royal ceremony. Ostensibly, they could have been there as representatives of the Scottish royal family. But more so, they would have been there as a display of John's power over William. Three of William's legitimate children were in John's hand, not simply as knights or 'quasi-hostages' but also, recall, future children-in-law. The occasion of March 1212 to underline this fact was undoubtedly one not to pass up. In fact, it has been noted that in the years from 1209 through 1212 the concessions made via Norham and the agreement that Alexander would marry at John's wish were 'completely at odds with any idea of Scottish independence,'<sup>40</sup> and in the years surrounding 1214 John was acting as 'overlord of Scotland in all but name.'<sup>41</sup> The ostentatious display of the Scottish princesses, in his own court and under his care whether as ward or hostage, would compound this image of John's control over Scotland. The apparent display of other Scottish hostages at the feast of St John the Baptist in 1213 shows another example of John's willingness to exhibit the hostage-spoils of his dominance over Scotland.<sup>42</sup>

William's death in 1214 did little to change this, though Alexander, upon assuming the throne in Scotland, would soon press his political advantage in the ensuing tumultuous years. In the 1215 Magna Carta, Clause 59 specifically referenced Margaret and Isabella alongside the other Scottish hostages. In regards to these 'sisters and hostages of Alexander,'<sup>43</sup> Alexander was to be treated as the other barons of England, whose hostages were to be returned according to Clause 49. In a large part this was significant to Alexander's claim to the border counties, continuing William's policy; Clause 59 also offers justice in accordance to Alexander's 'liberties and rights.'<sup>44</sup> A.A.M. Duncan concludes that Clause 59's purpose was in giving Alexander rights as an English baron, moving away from the fates of the unmarried princesses despite of the reference to them.<sup>45</sup> David Carpenter reads this clause in the 1215 Magna Carta as an attempt to negate the punishing terms of Norham, reasserting control over a Scottish kingship while maintaining his only relationship with John was as an English baron.<sup>46</sup> Within Magna Carta itself this is only one of three references to hostages, including Clause 49 (important to the construction of Clause 59), demanding the return of hostages taken from the England barons, and Clause 58, referencing the return of Welsh hostages including the son of Llywelyn. In fact, Clause 58 and 59 work in tandem, both referencing not only high-level hostages from troubled Scotland and Wales during John's reign but symbolically tying



together the status of Alexander's sisters and Llywelyn's son as high-ranking noblemen and women in the possession of the king.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Clauses 56–59 all deal with either Wales or Scotland, lands in which John had had significant issues during his reign, and link together the Welsh and Scottish hostages alongside the English ones referenced in Clause 49. Only Clause 59 deals with Scotland, though, but with references to charters John held from William, presumably the Treaty of Norham.<sup>48</sup> But like Llywelyn's son, the situation of Margaret and Isabella was well-known enough and their status high enough to be linguistically separated from the situation of the cadre of Welsh and Scottish hostages also referenced in the clauses. The status of Alexander's potential marriage as controlled by John is not referenced here outside of an oblique reference we might read into the reference in Clause 59 of charters from William. Perhaps Alexander had every intention of seeing his own marriage through. But at this time it was pressed that Margaret and Isabella were to be returned to Alexander, and their marriage arrangements would have been controlled by him.

This was not to be borne out, but Alexander pressed the advantage of 1215. After John's repudiation of the 1215 Magna Carta, Alexander took much of the north of England in late 1215 and formed alliances with the barons of the region, whose leaders were (not coincidentally) married to his illegitimate half-sisters.<sup>49</sup> At this time agreements were conducted between Alexander and these barons in regards to Margaret and Isabella's marriages, though these details do not survive.<sup>50</sup> Alexander was not only pressing his military and territorial advantages from 1215–17 but also diplomatic and political ones, most likely banking on the availability of his sisters to make strategic marriages to increase his own clout at the cost of John's. Here again, the fate of the sisters' marriages were being held, controlled and used to the advantage of a king. However, Alexander's advantage was not fully borne out, and in December 1217, he resubmitted to Henry III. Alexander was ready then to play politics with the English throne as opposed to fight it,<sup>51</sup> and his own and his sisters' marriages were a large part of this new approach. Probably not coincidentally, Clause 59 of the 1215 Magna Carta was omitted from all later versions.

Traces of Margaret and Isabella disappear in the documentary record for a period after the 1215 Magna Carta. In August 1219 Alexander was again negotiating marriage contracts, this time with Theobald IV, Count of Champagne and future King of Navarre, for Margaret.<sup>52</sup> This is likely in light of the fact that England was now in violation of the terms of the Treaty of Norham which stipulated that the marriage between Margaret and Henry would take place in 1216 or 1217, when the young Henry was nine or ten, and the marriage between Isabella and Richard one or two years after that.<sup>53</sup> This attempt with Theobald did not materialise, but is an early indication of Alexander's attempts to place the Scottish monarchy on par with European ones seen in the 1220s.<sup>54</sup> In 1220 there is unsurprisingly another round of marriage negotiations with England, listing that Alexander was to

marry Joan or her younger sister Isabella post-haste whilst Margaret and Isabella were to be married honourably or returned to Scotland.<sup>55</sup> At this point, all of the previous marriage agreements had gone awry: Alexander was not married within the prescribed six years of the 1212 charter, whilst the ‘unfortunate ladies’<sup>56</sup> were still unmarried in England.

Perhaps the terms of the 1220 agreement should have been more specific as to what constituted an ‘honourable’ marriage for Margaret and Isabella. The marriage between Alexander and Joan did indeed take place at York in 1221.<sup>57</sup> Hubert de Burgh, justiciar of England, married Margaret in the same year, probably in October although the agreements had probably been settled at Alexander’s own wedding.<sup>58</sup> De Burgh’s influence was undoubtedly at play here as he wed the princess intended for Henry III. Henry III even gave Margaret away at the wedding.<sup>59</sup> Isabella’s marriage duly followed suit: in 1225 she was wed to Roger (III) Bigod, the future earl of Norfolk.<sup>60</sup> However, there are brief glimpses of her in 1221–22: in September 1221, Isabella was back in the company of Eleanor of Brittany in Southampton, with both women provided robes, cloaks, caps and hoods including linings of squirrel and deerskin.<sup>61</sup> In November 1222, Henry III purchased horses for Isabella in order to go ‘to her own country.’<sup>62</sup> It could be debated whether this constituted sending Isabella back; in the same month the king was ordering bed linens and more clothing to be made for Isabella in London.<sup>63</sup> From 1222 through to 1225 Isabella is absent from the English documents until the record of her marriage to Roger (III) Bigod. Isabella received one-third of Roger’s land in dower in May 1225<sup>64</sup> and the pair were married at Alnwick in June.<sup>65</sup>

### Examining the Marriages

Many factors would have been at play in arranging both marriages, most perhaps circling around Hubert de Burgh. De Burgh’s star was on the rise in Henry III’s minority government and it is not impossible that his own influence nabbed him the older of the two Scottish princesses. He had already done well in his previous marriages: in 1208 to Beatrice de Warrene, heiress to her father’s barony at Wormegay and the mother of de Burgh’s only son, and in 1217 a marriage of mere days to Isabella, countess of Gloucester, the divorced wife of King John.<sup>66</sup> The marriage to Margaret tied him in a kinship relationship to both thrones of Scotland and England, carrying ‘tremendous prestige’ for this ‘younger son of a gentry family, who had made good in royal service.’<sup>67</sup> But the consolidation of his power that this marriage might have represented still did not confer upon him a title,<sup>68</sup> and did not always help him in playing for advantages: Roger of Wendover, for example, noted the disdain with which the Countess of Salisbury greeted a suit for her hand in marriage by de Burgh’s nephew after the rumour of William Longespee’s death at sea in 1225. According to Wendover, this suit was initiated by a request from de Burgh to Henry III, and ended with the

Countess angrily denying de Burgh's nephew, saying that her nobility prevented such a match.<sup>69</sup> However, de Burgh's many manoeuvres, of which a marriage to Margaret was surely one, was to come to fruition: in 1227, the first year of Henry III's majority, de Burgh was created the earl of Kent with the descendency of the earldom to be placed with any children of de Burgh and Margaret, who jointly held much of his land.<sup>70</sup>

The reasons for Isabella's marriage to Roger Bigod, who was the heir to the earldom of Norfolk, remain more muddled but again the influence of de Burgh was probably at hand. If de Burgh had manoeuvred for this marriage, he had managed to arrange for himself a brother-in-law who, in his majority, would be rich and powerful.<sup>71</sup> De Burgh already acted as custodian to the lands of the earl of Norfolk from 1223.<sup>72</sup> When the third earl died in 1225 while Roger was still in his minority, Roger's complicated wardship passed first to William Longespee, third earl of Salisbury and uncle to Henry III, but then to Alexander II following Roger's marriage to Isabella.<sup>73</sup> At this time Roger was probably thirteen;<sup>74</sup> Isabella's birthdate is unknown but was previous to her brother's in 1198, making her at least twenty-seven (but almost certainly older) at the time of finally being wed, sixteen years after the initial agreements of her marriage into England's Plantagenet family. With her husband's wardship passed to Alexander, Isabella, in effect, was back in the care of her own brother. Both Margaret and Isabella had been in gentle captivity amongst the English for perhaps as many as sixteen years; both may have been adept at knowing or at least watching the powerful men around them jockey for favour, and their marriages may have provided no different an atmosphere than their previous situations, save the difference of being wives instead of hostages or guests of the crown.

Both princesses also married below their ranks with only Isabella coming close to a match that might have behoved her station. It was a far fall: Hubert de Burgh, although undoubtedly a powerful man and even the widower (of sorts) of a former queen, was a man 'raised from the dust' in John's reign,<sup>75</sup> a man from a family of minor landholders who may best exemplify the possibilities of raising one's own power and rank through royal service. At the time of his wedding to Margaret, he was not a man without power, but certainly a man without a noble lineage. Even after his marriage to Margaret he still was not seen as suitable to mix with the upper echelons of England, as the episode with the countess of Salisbury demonstrates. It should be noted that this marriage apparently came with the approval of her brother Alexander, who certainly would have otherwise used her hand in marriage elsewhere to secure other international alliances, as seen before with the potential alliance with Champagne. Margaret's tie to one of the most powerful men in England, ennobled or not, could have been beneficial to Alexander in his new stance of playing politics with England, although it might have been a short-sighted move to approve of a marriage to de Burgh as opposed to Henry III himself. Perhaps after all this time and very little control of the situation, it was a matter of simply taking what Alexander could get.

Isabella's match might come closer to the expectations of marriage for a princess. The Bigod family had been secure in their earldom since its creation in 1141 but with a firm grip on their lands in East Anglia since Roger (I) Bigod's tenure as sheriff of Norfolk in the 1080s and his later reappointment in 1091.<sup>76</sup> The Bigods were, as Marc Morris has pointed out, 'a family worth marrying into.'<sup>77</sup> Though the underaged future earl of Norwich may not have been a particularly personally palatable match for a woman nearing thirty, the marriage would have provided her with an acceptable rank and position, though not the same as she might have expected with a marriage to John's son.<sup>78</sup> Roger (III) Bigod may not have been the *intended* match for Isabella, but was a relatively secure one. That Bigod's wardship was given first to William Longspee followed by Alexander certainly signified royal investment in the young earl alongside, undoubtedly, the control of the young earl. The shifting sands of the quasi-hostageship of Isabella was transferred to the wardship of her husband, so in essence from the king to Longespee and finally her own brother before Roger's majority. In modern terms an extensive amount of subcontracting took place for her custody. It is worth pointing out as well that an adult woman, moving from a quasi-hostageship to a marriage with an underage husband, was still treated as the minor her husband was despite her age; her position as wife fell under that of her husband's, and her husband's minority trumped all. Bigod finally received his knighthood and was invested as earl in 1233.<sup>79</sup>

Of the two sisters, Margaret's marriage seems to have been the most politically successful in terms of Margaret's own survival and authority. Despite de Burgh's contentious fall from power in the 1230s, Margaret managed to hold her own and come out after de Burgh's death with their lands and her own authority over them intact. Her secret arrangement of marriage between their daughter Megotta and the underage Richard de Clare, ward of the king in custody of de Burgh,<sup>80</sup> holds a whiff of control over her daughter's future that neither she nor her sister particularly experienced during their hostageships or wardships. After de Burgh's death in 1243, the agreements that made Margaret and him joint holders of their land held firm, and Margaret can be seen actively acting on behalf of her own lands for the rest of her life.<sup>81</sup>

Isabella's fortunes in perhaps the more fortuitous of the two marriages are less well known. In 1245 Roger Bigod began annulment proceedings, alleging consanguinity, though the church found in favour of the marriage in 1253.<sup>82</sup> This allegation twenty years after their marriage probably had much to do with their lack of children; without an heir, and with Isabella reaching nearly fifty or so, the earl was undoubtedly trying to plan for the future of his family. Though the proceedings found in favour of the marriage, Bigod accepted this with 'apparent equanimity;' the couple were still married at the time of their deaths in 1270.<sup>83</sup> Although Isabella's heart was interred alongside her husband's at the parish church of Framingham,<sup>84</sup> her

body was laid to rest at Blackfriars in London, where Margaret had been buried after her death in 1259.<sup>85</sup> The sisters were together again.

The potential marriages of Margaret and Isabella dominated their early lives. From their taking by John in 1209, the women were kept in good form—no one would have cause for complaint about the care and keeping of the princesses, and to wit there is no record of complaints outside of their lack of marriages—and they were duly displayed as a symbol of John's power over Scotland. Indeed their lack of marriages in the 1210s can be read as another power play, first by John, then by Henry III (or rather, his men). These two women were in the control of the English crown, not the Scottish one, and thus their dispensation to appropriate husbands was kept back, lorded over, and played close to the chest. This was in the interest of the English kings; John would have probably held his hand with the princesses until forced, which he never was; but he could have very well been waiting for a match for the princesses that would politically benefit him the most. Due to the arrangements of the Treaty of Norham and Henry's age at the time, John's delay in marrying Margaret to Henry was easily explainable, though the continued holding of the women beyond the terms of the Treaty create more questions as to their use and indeed their status. Perhaps after 1217, with the failure of arranging the marriages according to the Treaty and their original purpose for being in England unrealised, the sisters might legally be considered hostages regardless of the fact that their social use and day-to-day situations had not changed.

The broken promises of the 1210s and 1220s, however, were not put to rest and as late as 1237 the royal marriages of Margaret and Isabella were still on minds. When Alexander II relinquished the 1209 agreement alongside quitclaiming Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland,<sup>86</sup> the agreement made a point of mentioning the failure of the offered marriages between Henry, Richard, Margaret and Isabella. Considering the possibilities that might have been, it should be no doubt that Hubert de Burgh's fall from grace in the 1230s would particularly render this a sore point for the king of Scotland.

### **Conclusions: The Stuff of Legends**

Writing in 1263 or 1264, the chronicler of Melrose chose to list William giving up his daughters amongst seminal events such as the martyrdom of Thomas Beckett, the Battle of the Standard, the burning of Roxburgh and Berwick, and the foundation of Melrose Abbey itself.<sup>87</sup> The English custody of the Scottish princesses and their subsequent marriages were no longer just a matter of diplomatic fodder and a long memory of broken promises: it had become the stuff of historical legend.

The ambiguity with which contemporary and later sources treated Margaret and Isabella has muddled many of the issues of their lives. Medieval and modern writers flexibly interchanged how they referred to the princesses. The

Treaty of Norham itself speaks of the daughters being delivered to John,<sup>88</sup> with no references to hostageship, but then again there is no mention of hostages whatsoever in the recently-found text though male hostages were certainly delivered to John. The annals of Dunstable for 1220 refer to them as *in custodia*.<sup>89</sup> The later continuation of Gervase of Canterbury's *Gesta Regum* writes that William sent his daughters to John *per nuntios fideles*; he later mentions that Alexander too was sent to John but specifically not as a hostage.<sup>90</sup> Roger of Wendover writes that William's two daughters were delivered to John in hostageship in order to establish a more secure peace.<sup>91</sup> Later annals from the reigns of Edward I and II call Margaret and Isabella hostages,<sup>92</sup> as does Matthew Paris.<sup>93</sup> The *Chronicle of Huntingdon*, however, again simply refers to Margaret and Isabella as in John's custody.<sup>94</sup> More recently, David Carpenter keeps references to Alexander's 'hostages' and 'sisters' as two separate entities.<sup>95</sup> In Richard Oram's recent volume on Alexander II, the terminology used for the princesses are equally confused: John was given 'the right to arrange [the marriages] of [Alexander's] older sisters';<sup>96</sup> or there was John's 'seizure' of the sisters as 'political pawns "contrary to the wishes of the Scots."' <sup>97</sup> Perhaps our unwillingness to call particular medieval women hostages is a simple reflection of the same hesitation in the medieval world: perhaps high status women such as Margaret and Isabella were generally not to be thought of as hostages but women in custody, regardless of the little difference between the two. The potential and probable change in status after 1217 from custody to hostage no doubt does little to elucidate this due to the lack of change in situation for the sisters. The medieval confusion over the status of Margaret and Isabella should serve us both as an illustration and a warning. Perhaps our modern confusion over female medieval hostages is a reflection of a medieval delicacy in calling royal women in custody for peace by the same name.

And by the same token, perhaps our modern scholarship should open our eyes wider to the possibilities of medieval women in custody seen, by their contemporaries and by us, as hostages: perhaps comfortable, and delicately guarded without actual guards as opposed to with lock and key, but hostages nonetheless. Indeed the custody of Margaret and Isabella most closely resembled that of Eleanor of Brittany with the large exception of the always-explicit custody of the princesses for their potential marriage. If the marriage mandate were removed, Margaret and Isabella would have been held for reasons no differently than the other hostages of 1209: to maintain the terms of a treaty and act as a check on Scottish aggression. If we try to define what a medieval hostageship means by too strict a definition, we might lose sight of those like Margaret and Isabella whose status might have been shifting, dependent on circumstances around them, and apparently unclear even to those producing the records we use to reconstruct the past.

The course of the lives of these two women was irretrievably altered in 1209 in a way that has led historians for centuries to comment on their lives

usually in a bare line or two focusing on the lowest common denominators: that they were hostages, or wards, or wives. But beyond this, viewing Anglo-Scottish relations in the early thirteenth century through the traditional, masculinised lenses of warfare and diplomacy erases any other experiences, and marginalises the importance of marriage diplomacy via either treaty or hostageship. A close examination of Margaret and Isabella, however, provides a much richer idea of their lives and status, and highlights two crucial points: first, that making politically expedient marriages dominated the social landscape around them as part of a much greater construction of Anglo-Scottish power relations, and second, the danger that is incurred by seeking to define too closely what a female hostage *was* in the Middle Ages.

## Notes

- 1 My grateful thanks go to Matthew Bennett, Gwen Seabourne and Elena Woodacre for reading and commenting on earlier drafts, and to Jessica Nelson for generously sharing unpublished work with me. All remaining errors, of course, remain my own.
- 2 Wendover, II:60: 'et insuper ad maiorem securitatem traderet ei duas filias suas in obsidatum, ut per hoc inter eos pax firmio haberetur'; Sir Frederic Madden, ed., Matthew Paris: *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1866), 119: 'traderet eidem duas filias suas in obsidatum.' MPCM II, 525: 'et insuper ad maiorem securitatem traderet ei duas filias in obsidatum, ut per hoc inter eos pax firmior haberetur'; unsurprisingly, almost identical to Roger of Wendover's version of events.
- 3 *Annales Monastici* III: 58.
- 4 Kosto, table 4.2.
- 5 Stoertz, Fiona Harris, 'Young Women in France and England, 1050–1300,' *Journal of Women's History* 12:4 (2001): 24–5. Stoertz particularly notes that women could be both 'a hostage and a future wife,' citing Margaret, daughter of Louis VII of France who was 'sent to the household of the chief justice of Normandy to be raised as a wife for three-year-old Henry, son of Henry II of England, a part of peace agreements between the two countries': 25.
- 6 Seabourne, this volume.
- 7 David Carpenter, *Magna Carta* (London: 2015), 472–5. It is worth noting that no hostages at all are mentioned in this text of this treaty, though hostages are known to have been handed over as a part of this agreement.
- 8 See, for example, Gordon McKelvie, this volume; Gwen Seabourne, 'Eleanor of Brittany and her Treatment by King John and Henry III,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 51 (2007): 73–110.
- 9 A.A.M. Duncan, 'John King of England and the Kings of Scotland,' in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S.M. Church (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 260, 271; Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 239.
- 10 Richard D. Oram, *The Reign of Alexander II, 1214–49* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).
- 11 Keith J. Stringer, 'The War of 1215–17 and Its Context,' in Oram, *Alexander II*, 146.
- 12 For the third see Katherine Weikert, 'The (Truncated) Life of Alice de Solers Rufus nee Huntingfield: Medieval Hostage, Wife and Widow,' in *Writing the Lives of People and Things, AD 500–1700*, ed. Robert Smith and Gemma Watson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016), 13–27.



- 13 Seabourne, this volume.
- 14 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 474–5. Stone's reconstruction of the treaty suggested that the hostages were all named, though the fourteenth-century copy of the major terms of the treaty which Carpenter has discovered does not include the details of the male hostages.
- 15 E.L.G. Stones, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Scottish Relations 1174–1328: Some Selected Documents* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965, reprinted 1970), no. 12.
- 16 Keith Stringer, 'Alexander II (1198–1249),' *ODNB*, accessed 20 August 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/322.
- 17 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 239.
- 18 Jessica Nelson, 'Queens and Queenship in Scotland, circa 1067–1286' (Ph.D thesis, Kings College London, 2006), 131.
- 19 W.W. Scott, 'William I [William the Lion] (c. 1142–1214),' *ODNB*, accessed 20 August 2014, doi: 10.1093/ref:odnb/29452; W.W. Scott, 'Ermen-garde (d. 1233),' *ODNB*, accessed 25 August 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/49356; Nelson, 'Queens,' 126–63 for Ermengarde's career and 131–2 for commentary on the marriage.
- 20 Howden, II, 310.
- 21 Contra, Carpenter and Nelson both consider this arrangement 'humiliating' to William (*Magna Carta*, 239; 'Queens,' 149), with William's loss of 'crucial diplomatic tools': Nelson, 'Scottish Princesses in Thirteenth Century England' (Paper presented at the Thirteenth Century England Conference, Cambridge, 7–9 September 2015). Whilst both are valid considerations of the 1209 arrangement, long-term planning for a daughter as an English queen might have equally provided a sense of political manoeuvring benefitting the king of Scotland.
- 22 Stones, *Relations*, xlv–xlvi.
- 23 Bain, I, no. 463. As Nelson points out, the keeping of royal hostages or guests was an expensive business, and so fitz Piers' reticence to accept them can be understood at least in economic terms: 'Scottish Princesses.'
- 24 Including for the princesses and Robert fitz Roger, the constable of Chester, for one night's accommodation in Ripon to the tune of £6 15s 3½d in 1211x1212: Bain, I, no. 482. Before 26 July 1212 the princesses were in Bristol but were moved to Nottingham shortly thereafter: Bain, I, no. 530. In November 1212 the princesses were in Gloucester, where the king gave money to the sheriff of Gloucester, Engelard de Cigogné, for clothing for the princesses and their governesses (*magistrarum*): Bain, I, no. 544.
- 25 Bain, I, Introduction, xxx.
- 26 Bain, I, nos. 559, 562, 563, 564, 565, 568, 570, 572, 579, 581, 602, 612.
- 27 Bain, I, Introduction, xxx.
- 28 Bain, I, nos. 565, 568, 579.
- 29 Bain, I, nos. 579, 581.
- 30 Bain, I, nos. 562, 579, 581, 597, 602, 609.
- 31 Bain, I, nos. 544, 563, 581, 609.
- 32 Bain, I, no. 559.
- 33 Michael Jones, 'Arthur, duke of Brittany (1187–1203),' *ODNB*, accessed 22 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/704. Here, too, it is worth noting that Eleanor's position, whilst generally accepted in antiquarian and modern sources as a hostageship, was also itself fluid and rather ill-defined: Seabourne has established that Eleanor likely had some sort of a wardship-type relationship with the kings of England previous to Mirebeau, has cast reasonable doubt on the prevailing notion that Eleanor's hostageship sprang from a capture at Mirebeau, and also, and most interestingly, noted a change in Eleanor's relationship to her keepers after the early 1220s with a more 'serious effort to keep Eleanor

- confined' by the young Henry III (or, as is more likely, the men around him). Seabourne, 'Eleanor,' *passim*.
- 34 Seabourne, 'Eleanor;' Annette P. Parks, 'Rescuing the Maidens from the Tower: Recovering the Stories of Female Political Hostages,' in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Honor of Stephen D. White*, eds. Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 279–91.
- 35 Michael Jones, 'Eleanor, suo jure duchess of Brittany (1182x4–1241),' *ODNB*, accessed 22 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/46702.
- 36 Scott, 'William I.'
- 37 Stones, 'Relations,' no. 4; Scott, 'William I.'
- 38 Stones, 'Relations,' p. 26, n. 1; Scott, 'William I.'
- 39 The same record notes gifts of gyrfalcons from William to John, all a part of a related series of activities. Bain, I, no. 564.
- 40 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 240.
- 41 Stringer, 'Alexander II.'
- 42 Bain, I, no. 574. This same series of notices reports on the death of the daughter of Alan of Galweya (Galloway), another hostage to John, who had been in the custody of Robert fitz Roger. It is also worth noting in brief that William took as hostage the daughter of John, earl of Orkney and Caithness, upon John's ascendancy to the sole earlship following his brother's death in 1214. It is not known what happened to this daughter either at the time of her hostage-taking or at William's subsequent death a few months later. John of Fordun, printed in Alan Orr Anderson, ed. and trans., *Early Sources of Scottish History, A.D. 500 to 1286*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1922), 399 (note); W.W. Scott, 'Macheth family (per. c.1124–1215),' *ODNB*, accessed 25 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/49354; Scott, 'William I.'
- 43 'sororibus suis et obsidibus;' a precise status for Margaret and Isabella is avoided.
- 44 'et libertatibus suis, et jure suo'; Stringer, 'Alexander II.'
- 45 Duncan, 'John,' 266–7. Throughout this piece, Duncan also adamantly maintains that the Scottish princesses were *not* hostages, and suggests that the payments from the 1209 treaty may have been dowries.
- 46 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 240–1.
- 47 The return of the Welsh hostages was no doubt heavy on the Welsh prince's mind following the execution of some of them in 1212. A.D. Carr, 'Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (c.1173–1240),' *ODNB*, accessed 25 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/16874.
- 48 'per cartas quas habemus de Willelmo patre ipsius, quondam rege Scottorum.'
- 49 Stringer, 'Alexander II.'
- 50 Stringer references inventories of Scottish archives in 1282 and 1291 listing the negotiations between Alexander and the northern barons resulting in agreements about Margaret and Isabella's marriages: 'Alexander II;' Duncan, 'John,' 270–1 for the inventories.
- 51 Stringer, 'Alexander II.'
- 52 D.W. Hunter Marshall, 'A Proposed Marriage-Alliance between Scotland and Champagne,' *Scottish Notes and Queries*, vol. VII, 3rd series (November 1929), 207–9. Marshall interprets this letter as in regards to Alexander's illegitimate sister Margaret, though the terms of the negotiated agreement would suggest that it was not only for a legitimate daughter but also one in whom the king of England had a vested interest: terms included 6000 silver marks not only for the marriage but the same amount also paid to the king of England via the Knights Templars or Hospitallers '*facere securitatem*.' The fact that both the legitimate sister Margaret and the illegitimate sister Margaret were both unmarried in 1219 would have added to this confusion (the illegitimate sister

having been widowed by Eustace de Vescy in 1216 (Ralph V. Turner, 'Vescy, Eustace de (1169/70–1216),' *ODNB*, accessed 26 May 2015, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/28253)). However, the immense amount of money paid would strongly suggest the marriage of the legitimate Margaret, as would the details of lifecycle: the legitimate Margaret was at that time 24–32 years old (Scott, 'Margaret') in a good stage of lifecycle to provide an heir to Champagne, rather than the illegitimate Margaret, a widow of 38 (Scott, 'William I'). Further questions remain unanswered and possibly unanswerable about whether or not Theobald would have been seen as the heir to the throne of Navarre in 1219; if so, this would add another dimension of placing a Scottish princess on a Continental throne and adding to the expanding outlook of Alexander at that time; Elena Woodacre, pers. comm.

53 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 4474–5.

54 Richard Oram, 'An Overview of the Reign of Alexander II,' in Oram, *Alexander II*, 14.

55 *Foed.* I, i, 160–1; trans. Bain, I, no. 761.

56 Stones, *Relations*, xlvii.

57 Stringer, 'Alexander II.'

58 David Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1990), 245, 268.

59 Bower IX, no. 34. De Burgh, predictably, was later accused of helping himself to Margaret during Henry III's minority.

60 *Ibid.*

61 Bain, I, nos. 788, 815

62 Bain, I, no. 835.

63 Bain, I, nos. 836, 841. Nelson considers these a sort of 'going away present,' 'Scottish Princesses.' Marc Morris, without considering the provisions Henry III was still providing for Isabella in London, also considers this Isabella's return to Scotland: *The Bigod Earls of Norfolk in the Thirteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 5; the Chronicle of Melrose also records Isabella's return in 1223: Anderson, *Early Sources*, 454. Isabella's location from late 1222 through to her marriage is clearly up for debate. She might have gone to her brother at that time, but the expense paid for bed linens and clothing paid in London for Isabella's use must question the permanency of her visit to Scotland.

64 Bain, I, no. 906.

65 *Calendar of the Fine Rolls of the Reign of Henry III 1224–1225*, no. 204. Henry III Fine Rolls Project, (<http://www.finerollshenry3.org.uk>), accessed 27 August 2014.

66 F.J. West, 'Burgh, Hubert de, earl of Kent (c. 1170–1243),' *ODNB*, accessed 20 August 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/3991.

67 Carpenter, *Minority*, 246.

68 Carpenter notes that the marriage made de Burgh 'earl-worthy': *Minority*, 246.

69 Roger of Wendover, *Flores Historiarum*, ed. and trans. J.A. Giles, London: 1849, 2 vols., vol. 2, p.465–6; Jennifer C. Ward, 'Ela, *suo jure* countess of Salisbury (b. in or after 1190, d. 1261),' *ODNB* (2009), accessed 25 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/47205.

70 Carpenter, *Minority*, 395.

71 Morris, *Bigod*, 5.

72 Morris, *Bigod*, 5.

73 Robert C. Stacey, 'Bigod, Roger (III), fourth earl of Norfolk (c. 1212–1270),' *ODNB*, accessed 20 August 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2380. Bigod's wardship was no doubt complicated by the fact that Bigod's overlord would have been the king, who was also himself a minor; Morris, *Bigod*, 4.

- 74 Stacey, 'Bigod, Roger (III).'
- 75 See Ralph V. Turner, *Men Raised from the Dust: Administrative Service and Upward Mobility in Angevin England*, Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).
- 76 A.F. Wareham, 'Bigod, Hugh (I), first earl of Norfolk (d. 1176/7),' *ODNB*, accessed 20 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/2376.
- 77 Morris, *Bigod*, 2.
- 78 Marc Morris, however, considers this marriage 'preordained': *Bigod*, 5.
- 79 Stacey, 'Bigod, Roger (III).'
- 80 West, 'Burgh, Hubert de'; Scott, 'Margaret.' Richard de Clare was a grandson of William Marshal and thus a cousin of Isabella's husband Roger (III) Bigod, earl of Norfolk, and nephew of Isabella and Margaret's sister's husband, Gilbert Marshal (see below); another of Richard de Clare's uncles, Richard Marshal, had guarded Hubert de Burgh upon his fall from grace in 1232—which had necessitated Margaret, Megotta and Richard de Clare's sanctuary at Bury in the first place.
- 81 Bain, I, nos. 1582, 1617, 1620, 1714, 1718, 1729, 1730, 1733, 1734, 1735, 1736, 1754, 1764, 1771, 1773, 1779, 1810, 1814, 1850, 1937, 1939, 2059.
- 82 Stacey, 'Bigod, Roger (III).'
- 83 Morris, *Bigod*, 100.
- 84 Morris, *Bigod*, 100. Morris notes that the rest of Bigod was buried at Thetford.
- 85 Scott, 'Margaret.' A third sister, Marjorie, married to Gilbert Marshal, seventh earl of Pembroke, had been buried at Blackfriars in 1244, the first of the three to be interred there: Scott, 'Ermengarde.' As a point of interest, Gilbert Marshal was the uncle of Roger (III) Bigod, Isabella's husband. Gilbert Marshal's brother, Richard Marshal, sixth earl of Pembroke, had guarded Margaret's husband, Hubert de Burgh, upon his fall from grace in 1232; Isabella's husband, Roger (III) Bigod had stood with his uncle Richard Marshal on his brief rebellion in 1233: D.J. Power, 'Marshal, Richard, sixth earl of Pembroke (d. 1234),' *ODNB*, accessed 25 Aug 2014, doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/18124; Stacey, 'Roger (III) Bigod.' The brief if controversial marriage of Megotta de Burgh and Robert de Clare, a grandson of William Marshal, further tied the family of the Scottish princesses to the Marshals. The three sisters' marriages were just as fascinatingly intertwined as had been the two sisters' quasi-hostageships.
- 86 Rothwell, Harry, ed., 'Treaty between the kings of England and Scotland, 1237,' *EHD* Vol. 3, 1995, accessed 29 October 2015, [www.englishhistoricaldocuments.com/document/view.html?id64](http://www.englishhistoricaldocuments.com/document/view.html?id64); Stones, *Relations*, no. 7; Stringer, 'Alexander II,' Oram also notes that in 1237 '[a]ll copies of the 1209, 1212, and 1221 treaties were to be returned to the respective parties for destruction': 'Overview,' 15.
- 87 Anderson, *Early Sources*, 560–561.
- 88 'W. rex Scotie tradidit nobis duas filias suas,' Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 474.
- 89 *Annales Monastici* III, 58.
- 90 *Gervase* II, 103. As there is no other record of Alexander going at this time, this might have been conflating this with Alexander's later knighthood bestowed by John.
- 91 Wendover, II, 50: '... et insuper ad maiorem securitatem traderet ei duas filias suas in obsidatum, ut per hoc inter eos pax firmio haberetur.'
- 92 *Chron. Ed.I and II*, I:14: 'tradidit duas filias in obsides.'
- 93 Sir Frederic Madden, ed., Matthew Paris: *Historia Anglorum*, vol. II (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1866), 119: 'traderet eidem duas filias suas in obsidatum.' *MPCM* II, 525: 'et insuper ad maiorem securitatem traderet ei duas filias in obsidatum, ut per hoc inter eos pax firmior haberetur'; unsurprisingly almost identical to Roger of Wendover's version of events.

- 94 William. F. Skene, ed., *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and other Early Memorials of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1867), 213: 'Et filie Willelmi Regis scilicet Margareta et Isabella tradite sunt in custodiam Domino Regi Anglie.'
- 95 Carpenter, *Magna Carta*, 353.
- 96 Oram, 'Overview,' 8.
- 97 Keith J. Stringer, 'Kingship, Conflict and State-Making in the Reign of Alexander II: The War of 1215–17 and Its Context,' in Oram, *Alexander II*, 101, citing Melrose, 54.

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## 9 “Thy Father’s Valiancy Has Proved No Boon”

### The Fates of Helena Angelina Doukaina and Her Children

*Annette Parks*

Most of my research work to date has focused on the experiences of medieval hostages with a central theorem, contrasting to but not necessarily conflicting with many in this volume, that hostages are typically not subject to the same pressures, dangers, and sanctions as other types of detainees because hostages, especially social elites, are not detained primarily as a form of leverage. Rather, they are most often diplomatic tools for building social and political relationships.<sup>1</sup> One result of this very specific role is that when hostages are executed or treated badly, contemporaries usually go to great lengths to either condemn or justify the actions of those responsible. While the treatment of hostages must be viewed through the lenses of numerous mediating factors—sex, age, whether they are domestic (hostages given within a single political unit) or state (those given across political boundaries) hostages, for example—in general they could expect certain protections. However, when the detainees, even elite women and children, could be classed as captives those protections along with any public opprobrium might vanish.

This essay attempts to meet two very specific goals. First, it will explore the question of why the distinction between hostages and captives is critical to understanding the motives of medieval political actors as well as the outcomes for detainees.<sup>2</sup> Second, it seeks to illustrate the first goal by recovering the stories of an elite woman and her children who have been all but lost to mainstream history. Part of an on-going larger piece focusing on this family, this segment of the work is based largely on Italian and Spanish primary sources in addition to more recent secondary works.

The story begins with an account of a reunion in 1284 between Constance, queen of Aragon and her sister Beatrice who had been detained for many years by Charles of Anjou.<sup>3</sup> A reference in the *Chronicle of Ramon Muntaner* refers to Queen Constance, in the aftermath of the Aragonese defeat and capture of Charles of Salerno (son of Charles of Anjou) in 1284, prevailing upon her husband to demand that the Angevins release her sibling.<sup>4</sup>

As I began the hunt for Beatrice and the details of her captivity, I kept running across references to the ‘unfortunate’ or the ‘unhappy’ Helena, the wife of King Manfred of Sicily and mother to Beatrice and step-mother to



Constance. Reviewing Muntaner's account of events leading up to the joyful reunion between the sisters, it became increasingly problematic to classify Beatrice: her treatment at the hands of her captors suggests that she was closely guarded, but well-treated, a typical situation for a noble hostage. However, if she was a hostage, whose behaviour was she intended to control? Which relationship(s) was she intended to enhance? Or, was she actually a captive instead? In the process of unravelling those questions, it soon became clear that she was part of a much bigger story. Beatrice was not the only one of her family members who had ended up in the hands of Charles of Anjou. Beatrice and her siblings had been detained after their father's death while trying to escape with their mother. Helena and Manfred had three, possibly four, other children and there were dark rumours of horrific mistreatment of Beatrice's three young brothers. Not the outcome we would ordinarily expect to find when the detainees were sons of a king. Moreover, if, the allegations of maltreatment of the boys were true, what had triggered or justified it? And, why was there no outrage, no attempt to explain, no demands for vengeance?

## The Backstory

In 1258 sixteen-year-old Helena Angelina Doukaina married Manfred, King of Sicily. Unlike many arranged marriages, this one had not been planned years in advance as part of a carefully considered political strategy, but rather came about as a result of an alliance made on the fly between her father, Michael II, the Despot of Epirus, and the recently widowed Manfred who officially acquired key territories as his new wife's dowry.<sup>5</sup> Helena had never met Manfred before she became his wife; indeed she may never have heard of him until he became a military problem for her father. History has not preserved her reaction to this unexpected turn of events, but we do know that she became Manfred's queen-consort, bore him four or five children in eight years, was captured after Manfred was killed in battle in 1266, and that she was dead before age thirty, living out the last five years of her life in close captivity.

Helena's story is both tragic and romantic, in the most archaic sense of the word, but for the historian of hostages and captives, the fates of her children present a disturbing anomaly. Her daughters Beatrice, no older than age seven, and Flordelis, an infant, were imprisoned along with their mother. Beatrice was held captive for some eighteen years while what happened to Flordelis is uncertain.<sup>6</sup> Helena's sons, Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm, probably ages 4, 3, and 2,<sup>7</sup> were immured in the dungeons of various fortresses for the rest of their lives, after, according to some accounts, having been blinded on the orders of Charles of Anjou.<sup>8</sup> Those less familiar with hostage and captive protocols in the Middle Ages might dismiss this as a typical example of 'medieval barbarism' but in truth this type of treatment, especially of the children of elites, was not common and it is the rarity of such cases that calls for their investigation.

It is useful to begin with a condensed version of the politics and the players in later thirteenth-century Sicily. The island itself came under the direct control of the German house of Hohenstaufen in 1189 with the death of William II and blinding and castration of William's heir by Henry VI. Henry's claim was in the right of his wife and points us to one of the issues affecting both Helena and her children: the potential to pass along territorial claims via marriage.

Henry's death in 1197 brought his two-year old son Frederick to the throne (as Frederick I of Sicily and later Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor), setting off a period of twenty years of instability and weakening of the German monarchy, especially in southern Italy. In adulthood Frederick embarked on a determined campaign to rebuild German power in southern Italy. This, along with his alliance with the crown of Aragon through his marriage to Constance of Aragon in 1209, made him a formidable adversary and party to a succession of tortured relationships with the papacy, setting the stage for what would eventually happen with his grandsons in Sicily.

By the time of his death in 1250, Frederick's activities, both political and procreative, had created a complicated legacy. His will appointed his son Conrad monarch of Germany (as Conrad IV), Sicily (as Conrad I), and the kingdom of Jerusalem (as Conrad II). He settled an appanage in southern Italy on Manfred, Conrad's half-brother, making him the prince of Taranto and installing him as Conrad's representative in Italy until the latter could come from Germany to claim the Sicilian kingship. Manfred was an illegitimate son of Frederick's by his mistress Bianca Lancia, although Frederick reportedly married her on her deathbed and Frederick's own actions—e.g., Manfred's appointment as the Prince of Taranto—provide for Manfred as a full son.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, the question of Manfred's legitimacy, and subsequently his right to rule, were factors that weighed against the position of his sons when it came to their treatment in captivity.

By 1253 tensions between Conrad and Manfred led to the latter being stripped of his holdings other than Taranto. However, when Conrad died suddenly in 1254, leaving behind as heir two-year-old Conradin, Manfred was able to act on his ambitions to acquire the Sicilian throne for himself. Initially, he seemed content to play the role of regent on Conradin's behalf, even defending Conradin's rights against papal incursions. But an increasingly chilly relationship with the papacy and a rumour in the summer of 1258 that Conradin had died, led Manfred to assume, some would argue usurp, the kingship of Sicily. His popularity and success in uniting much of southern Italy under his influence only served to harden the already intractable papal enmity toward the Hohenstaufen line.

While fighting against papal intrigues, Manfred also pursued ambitions on the Adriatic coast, ultimately resolving one conflict by employing the expedient of a diplomatic marriage. Offering his daughter to Manfred as part of his diplomatic strategy, Michael II, the Despot of Epirus, also offered Corfu and the three coastal towns of Butrinto, Avlona and Suboto

as her dowry, confirming Manfred's possession of territories he had already wrested from Michael. The marriage to Helena took place in 1258, the same year that Manfred betrothed Constance, his daughter from his first marriage, to Peter of Aragon, gaining a nominal alliance and access to the outstanding Aragonese navy. The marriage of Peter and Constance would also have a role to play in determining the consequences for Helena's and Manfred's sons since it put into play the issue of Constance and Peter as potential successors in Sicily.

Concern about Hohenstaufen encirclement of papal lands and the defence of their claim that Sicily was indeed a papal fief, augmented by personal enmity for the members of the line itself, led successive popes to offer the throne of Sicily to various European nobles. Finally in 1263 Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX of France undertook the charge of wresting the throne from Manfred. Under the terms of his agreements with Urban IV and his successor Clement IV, Charles's incursion into Italy was billed as a crusade, another factor that would support his decisions about how Manfred's sons would fare. The ability to portray Manfred as a usurper and an enemy of the church would rob his sons of potential protective cover. Having made careful financial and diplomatic arrangements, Charles embarked for Italy; on 28 February 1266, the two armies took the field at Benevento. By the end of the day Manfred was dead.

### **Captive Queen, Domestic Hostage, or Hostage-Bride?**

Queen Helena received news of Manfred's death several days later while ensconced at the fortress of Lucera. Almost immediately abandoned by all but a handful of staunch adherents, she decided her best plan of action was to escape Italy, probably hoping to reach Corfu, which was under the control of her husband's admiral Philip Chinardo.<sup>10</sup> In early March, she and her party abandoned Lucera for the seaport of Trani. Poor weather prevented them from embarking and she was forced to seek refuge at the fortress of Trani. The queen and her children were actively sought by Charles's agents who arrived at Trani disguised as friars before she could make her escape. Whether his cooperation was bought or coerced, Trani's castellan betrayed the royal family to Charles's spies. Helena was separated immediately from perhaps all of her children, but most certainly from her sons. Helena herself was kept at Trani, while her sons were removed to the fortress of Castel de Monte in Bari where it was rumoured that they suffered blinding, but it is certain that they were never again in the presence of their mother.

Charles's treatment of Queen Helena was fairly consistent with the expectations of the time. Although both Charles and the papacy condemned Manfred as a usurper, there were concerns that Sicilian and Hohenstaufen loyalists might be convinced to rally around a new claimant to the throne, as they indeed would do in 1267 with the arrival of Conradin from Germany. To let Manfred's widow loose could only invite trouble. Although as queen-consort,

she held no personal claim to the throne, she could play the powerful and sympathetic role of a widow protecting the interests and inheritances of her children. Further, Charles's physical possession of the queen bolstered his claim to her dower lands which he insisted were his by right of conquest. She was held for several months at Trani before being sent to Castel Lagopesole to meet with Charles. Del Giudice writes that Helena was asked, and refused, to sign over her dotal rights once she learned that Charles was promising her freedom, but not that of her children.<sup>11</sup> Charles then had her transferred to the more secure fortress of the Castel di Nocera from which she never emerged.<sup>12</sup> Del Giudice further reports that Charles and Clement IV seriously considered the possibility of a diplomatic marriage between the widowed queen and Prince Henry of Castile, who in 1266 was one of the allies to whom Charles owed a substantial amount of money. Del Giudice writes that Clement IV objected to the match on the grounds that as Charles's ally, Henry's possession of Helena would put too much power in the hands of the Angevins so that the scheme came to naught.<sup>13</sup> Ultimately, it seems that keeping custody of any potential claimants to Manfred's legacy overrode any other political or diplomatic concerns. How then should we classify her detention?

The young queen's 'honourable, but austere, captivity' was defined by her being allowed to have some of her furnishings and other possessions as well as a few personal servants. However, this would have been sparse consolation when she had no idea about what had happened to her sons. Janet Ross notes the inventory of belongings taken after her death:

Helena died in February, 1271 aged twenty-nine and no trace of her grave is to be found at Nocera, while the castle, where the beautiful queen lay a prisoner, is a heap of ruins. The inventory given to the king at Naples by Enrico della Porta, her gaoler of the very small amount of clothes, jewels and furniture she left, brings her misery vividly before us. Everything is marked as . . . worn and old.<sup>14</sup>

Although she could have served a number of useful purposes, Helena must be considered a captive. Charles's request or demand that she renounce her dotal lands is as close as we get to a ransom demand, although we do not know for certain what was promised in exchange. The proposed marriage to Henry of Castile was less a case of hostage-bride than a use of her person to satisfy a debt. Helena was too valuable to release, yet not significant enough to be kept in a manner befitting a queen. Although she was not a hostage, her sex, elite status, and relative political insignificance did at least secure her physical safety as a captive.

### **The Little Princes in the Dungeon**

Of Manfred's sons, what we can say for certain is that they rarely, if ever, again saw the light of day. Accounts of their capture, treatment, and whether or not they still lived were spread largely by rumour. As just one example, the

boys' aunt Constance (Anna), widow of the emperor of Nicaea, was among those taken prisoner by Charles in 1266.<sup>15</sup> She was freed, perhaps for the purpose of bringing to her niece Constance and Peter of Aragon the false news that the boys were dead.<sup>16</sup> However, records from the state archives in Naples show that all three of Manfred's sons were still inmates at Castel del Monte in 1298 and Del Giudice argues convincingly that while other high value prisoners, including Henry of Castile, were also held there, none were kept in darkness and chains as were Helena's sons.<sup>17</sup> By 1300, some sixteen years after Beatrice's release, they were moved to another fortress, Castel del'Uovo. Although Beatrice had also been held there, there is little evidence to suggest that all of Manfred's children were ever at the castle at the same time or, that if they were, they were aware of each other's presence.

This transfer to Castel del'Uovo was the beginning of the end of the boys' lives. Of their transfer, Donald M. Nicol writes:

the long journey on horseback through a countryside that they had never seen proved too much for their stiff and emaciated bodies. Within a year Frederick and Azzolino [Anselm] seem to have died. Only Enrico, aged about 38 was left. He lived as a lonely prisoner for another 18 years . . . He died a miserable death, half-starved, half-witted and probably blind in October 1318 at the age of 56 in the dungeons of the castle where he had been born.<sup>18</sup>

Sources that speak to the conditions of their captivity state that the boys were kept heavily chained and in close, obscure confinement within the dungeons of whatever place they were confined. Surviving Angevin financial records also suggest that intentionally or otherwise they were malnourished. Davanzati notes that one source argues that the allowances for their food and upkeep were never increased as they aged so that they may have been receiving the same rations into their teens and young adult years as they had as young children. His own research refutes that assessment; however, he also noted that the allowance for food and clothing for Helena's sons as late at 1294 was one gold *tari* per day which was in no way commensurate with expectations given their royal birth<sup>19</sup> and likely barely enough to sustain them. Janet Ross adds that:

Castel del Monte was destined to be the prison of the unfortunate sons of Manfred and Helen. When mere babies (the eldest, Henry, [Enrico] was only four years old) they were torn from their mother, and could only count the long dreary years by the increasing weight of their chains. They were clothed and fed like beggars; deserted and forgotten by all.

After thirty-two years Charles II seems suddenly to have remembered his father's unhappy captives, and a writing of his is still extant ordering that they should not be allowed to die of hunger. The following year, in June 1299, they were transferred to the Castel dell'Ovo at Naples where their sister Beatrice had been imprisoned for so long.<sup>20</sup>

These descriptions of the circumstances of the boys' detention are significant as they support claims that Charles of Anjou and his successors kept Manfred's sons chained and in darkness for their entire lifetimes. Nicol's account of Enrico's condition is also noteworthy since it may absolve Charles of the worst of the charges against him, the blinding of Helena's sons. The origin for this story is a claim maintained by the now lost chronicle by Anonymous of Trani and repeated by other sources hostile to Charles of Anjou. The inevitable damage to Enrico's, Frederick's and Anselm's eyesight from years of being kept in darkness could have given rise to the claim that all three were blinded as children, especially since the chronicle of Anonymous of Trani was written many years after their original detention.

But Charles II's remembrance of his captives in 1295 was neither sudden nor coincidental. Treaty negotiations for pacts signed at Tarascon in 1291 and Anagni in 1295 included some provisions for the treatment of Helena's sons. A number of documents calling for the conditions of their captivity to be ameliorated, by increasing the amount of funding for their food and the removal of their heavy chains, begin to appear as the course of the War of the Sicilian Vespers and the subsequent Aragonese Crusade dragged on. By 1297 there are even documents suggesting that they might be transferred from the Angevin prison to papal custody. Had Helena's sons been hostages, it could be argued that the calls for better treatment were a prelude to threats to produce competing claimants to the Aragonese. However, in this case, Del Giudice's argument for the influence of their aunt Constance, by now Peter's widow, is compelling. With Sicily (on paper at least) lost to Aragon, he credits Constance and her son James II with wanting to relieve somewhat the captives' suffering, prompting a communication from Charles II to his vicar commanding that Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm have their chains removed and be treated honourably. Further, the king ordered that medical treatment be given since one of the brothers was said to be sick, as well as allowed visits from Brother Matthew of Matera.<sup>21</sup> It is possible that their transfer to Castel del'Uovo in 1300 was part of a diplomatic move made by their Aragonese kin to seek the moderation, but not the end of their imprisonment.

### **There Really Are Monsters under the Bed**

From the beginning, an underlying question in this research was what kind of monster(s) would dole out such treatment to mere babies? And did no one register a complaint, voice outrage or even question what had happened to Helena's children? As for the latter questions, the answer is a resounding no; in the case of monsters, we need look no further than the obvious suspects. It seems that everyone who might have intervened on the behalf of these children, except for their mother and possibly their sister Beatrice, had powerful incentives to see them consigned to obscurity.

*Charles of Anjou*

Of all the parties involved, the 'monster' Charles of Anjou's motives were the most straightforward and easily understandable. His acquisition of the Sicilian throne had come at the expense of time and treasure, and unlike Manfred who had built a history and a following in southern Italy, Charles was an outsider. His actions with respect to Helena and her children were rooted in calculated pragmatism. In her account of Charles's relationships with his own family, Jean Dunbabin notes that he 'had a firm sense of the value of lineage . . . and was fully aware of the value of collateral and matrimonial ties to a ruler living for the most part amid an alien population.'<sup>22</sup> No doubt that same awareness helped to guide his actions in dealing with Manfred's family.

Like Manfred, Charles's ambitions ranged well beyond establishing his rule in southern Italy. With interests as varied as the re-conquest of Constantinople to guarding against the danger of coastal Adriatic territories falling into the hands of the Byzantines, he needed Helena's dower lands to bolster his position as a power in the region. Although he laid claim to her dower lands by right of conquest, Dunbabin notes that 'It was one thing to claim Helena's dowry, another to obtain possession.'<sup>23</sup> Helena's refusal to sign over her dotal rights was at most inconvenient, while his detention of her person allowed him to prevent her transmitting those rights to another, likely hostile, claimant. As noted earlier, she was not held as a hostage as there were no realistic circumstances under which it would have been safe to release, exchange or even ransom her.

Charles's continued detention of Manfred's sons and heirs was a practical matter as well. The most obvious reason for not releasing them and for the secrecy surrounding their detention was to prevent them from becoming a focal point for a still-robust opposition to French rule in Sicily and on the mainland.<sup>24</sup> Despite the scholarly focus on the Angevins and the Hohenstaufens, Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm too held strong claims to the Sicilian throne. Keeping them alive, but well out of public notice would have served to cause people over time to forget them altogether. As William Chester Jordan writes, 'What was needed for Charles of Anjou, since 1266 King Charles of Sicily, was time, enough time for the memory of the Hohenstaufen era to fade and for loyalties to the family in Germany, Italy, and Sicily to ebb away.'<sup>25</sup>

Why not simply kill them, especially if it was already being rumoured that they were dead? In this one area, it seems that the papacy and public opinion did at least impose some boundaries. Before Conradin's death in 1268, Charles and the Pope would have thought it best to keep the children alive as they might be of some future negotiating value with Constance and Peter of Aragon. In other words, they could use them as hostages. However, Conradin's death, making both Charles's and the papacy's positions more secure, closed the door on hostageship for Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm.



From that point forward, the strategy became one of keeping them securely imprisoned and away from any public notice, perhaps hoping the children's youth and the harsh conditions of their imprisonment might send them to early and 'natural' deaths.

Del Giudice writes that Charles's French 'crusaders' would have gloried in the amount of Saracen blood spilled in the war against Manfred but would have balked at the murder of the innocent children of a valiant father.<sup>26</sup> However, it would seem that Charles's intent was to wipe out the very memory of these children and in this he succeeded famously.<sup>27</sup> Like their mother, they were not useful as hostages, a status which might have guaranteed them more compassionate treatment. Unlike Helena, their possible liberation was much more dangerous. As captives the priority was to ensure that they could not escape or be rescued and, apart from the remote location of Castel del Monte, their confinement in heavy chains was intended to guard against that eventuality. Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm were left to the tender mercies of a man who had no reason to show them any mercy. Further, had Charles been concerned about damage to his reputation for such barbaric treatment of the children, his status as crusader and victor, as well as the secrecy surrounding their detention, offered cover. The determination of what happened to Helena and her family was left largely to his discretion.

Presented with the presence of three innocents when even the popes that despised their lineage would not condone their murders, Charles's actions seem to indicate that he hoped that hard imprisonment, poor food, and terrible living conditions would send the children speedily to 'natural' deaths, thus solving the conundrum of what to do with noble babies. If so, however, his hopes in this regard at least were defeated. Charles himself and his sons Charles and Philippe were all dead while the last of Manfred's sons still clung tenaciously to life.<sup>28</sup>

### *The Papacy*

Justifying the role of the papacy in this drama may be the most difficult task of all. Medieval popes are frequently, and somewhat unfairly, criticised for behaving as secular rather than religious princes, but in reality they were forced by circumstances to play both roles. As for the papal vendetta against the house of Hohenstaufen, it too was rooted in practical concerns. Dealing with a powerful, ambitious, and talented lineage, the papacy was justified in its anxiety over being encircled and eventually overpowered by the German kings and emperors. Nonetheless, the way in which it responded to the challenge does not show the church's leadership in its best light.

Clement IV's desire to extirpate the 'brood of vipers' is the essential statement of the papal position as it applied to all of Frederick II's kin and heirs.<sup>29</sup> While much attention has been paid to the papal response, or lack thereof, to Conradin's execution in 1268 at the hands of Charles of Anjou, there is nothing but silence when it comes to Manfred's progeny. Still, we

cannot expect to find any genuine sympathy here for these children who were perceived, especially after Conradin's death, as the absolute last of the Frederick II's male line.<sup>30</sup> Their deaths or equally satisfactory, disappearance, would effectively end the threat of that dynasty's influence in Italy which was deemed a more important outcome than the fates of three innocent, terrified children.

There can be no question that the popes from Clement IV forward had knowledge of the existence of Manfred's and Helena's sons and the conditions under which they were being held. It is an indication of the ugliness of the conflict between the papacy and the Hohenstaufen that it was willing to countenance this situation. It suited papal sensibilities to have the children almost literally buried alive; after all, it could be argued that their imprisonment was an act of mercy when they deserved death, if for no other reason than their position as branches of the hated lineage of Frederick and Manfred.

As the sponsors of Charles of Anjou's crusade against Manfred, the papacy had given Charles a free hand in dealing with his prisoners; in letters to Charles, Clement gave him complete authority over Helena, her children, any confiscated treasure and even Manfred's corpse!<sup>31</sup> Short of outright murder of the children, which even the papacy's resolute hatred of the Hohenstaufen would not allow, Charles was able to deal with them as he wished. The primary papal concern expressed most consistently was that Helena's sons should never escape the hands of their captor or his successors. Even in 1297 with negotiations focused on merely lightening the burdens of the captives and providing them with sufficient food, the papal injunction against ever allowing them to go free or escape was reiterated. Frustrated in his hopes of having them transferred to a papal prison, Boniface VIII 'forbid at all costs their liberation.'<sup>32</sup>

### *The Despots of Epirus*

What then of Helena's relatives? When Helena and her children were captured in 1266, they were attempting to make their way to Corfu or perhaps to Helena's father Michael II in Epirus. Fighting to preserve his territory from incursions by Charles of Anjou on the one hand and the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII on the other, Helena's father was in no position to make demands, if indeed he even knew of the plight of his daughter and grandchildren. The written record does not indicate that he ever made any attempt to intervene on their behalf, and sometime between May 1267 and August 1268 Michael II had died. His heir, Helena's brother Nikephoros, seems to have made no efforts on her behalf either. In fact, his diplomatic manoeuvres included negotiating an alliance with Charles of Anjou by June 1276, less than five years after his sister's death. The agreement, which made Nikephoros Charles's 'man' in exchange for territory in Achaia, makes no mention of his sister's children. Did the Epirite believe that the children

were dead? It is impossible to say; but if there was any mention of them during the negotiations, records of it have not survived. Although we might expect that Helena's birth relatives would have had the greatest interest in securing her and her children's release, Helena's story is a stark reminder of the how individual fates could be subsumed to political necessity. Helena and her children could not be used as hostages against the rulers of Epirus, nor did they hold enough value to those same rulers to risk fortune, territory or diplomatic position to redeem them.

### *Constance of Aragon*

Constance's concern for her half-sister is both touching and admirable. After all, she did not have a personal relationship with a younger sister who would have been a mere infant when Constance married Peter in June of 1262. However, we have to wonder, was she equally concerned about what had happened to her half-brothers? In fairness, by 1284 she could be forgiven for believing, as many others apparently did, that the boys (whom she had never met or even seen) were long dead; after all, no one save their jailers had seen them in nearly twenty years. But on a more cynical note, the terms of her acceptance as queen of Sicily also included assurance that she would be succeeded by her own sons, Jaime and Frederique.<sup>33</sup> The surfacing of potential competing heirs was a complication best left unaddressed.<sup>34</sup>

Both the *Chronicle of Ramon de Muntaner* and the *Chronicle of Pedro of Aragon* confirm that it was Roger de Lauria, admiral of the Aragonese navy, who captured Charles of Salerno and demanded as the price for his life the release of the queen's sister, Beatrice. Desclot in the *Chronicle of Pedro of Aragon* goes further to say that Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm 'were left behind by de Loria (sic), as he did not know what to do with them.'<sup>35</sup> And, if the now-young men—Enrico would have been about twenty-four at the time—were in the kind of condition described by Nicol and elsewhere, blind, emaciated, and half-mad, they might indeed have been considered an intractable problem, better left literally in the dark.

This report, if true, does not speak well of Constance or Beatrice, for that matter, since by not seeking the boys' release, they were condemning their brothers to a living death. However, this account is countered by documents uncovered by both Del Giudice and Forges-Davanzati showing that Beatrice's brothers were not transferred to Castel del'Uovo until sometime after 1298, at least fourteen years after Beatrice had been released from there.

Another similarity between the two Spanish chronicles is that they resolutely couch Peter's interference in Italy terms of a desire to avenge the deaths of Manfred and Conradin as well as to defend his wife's claim to the Sicilian throne as Manfred's *sole surviving heir*. Ironically, Constance is praised for her decision to treat her captive Charles of Salerno, Charles of Anjou's son, with every courtesy and consideration such that she 'would not permit him to be bound in chains nor imprisoned within a donjon, so that the Prince went freely and alone in the palace wherein he was guarded. And they

did him all the honour that they could for he was a prisoner of high estate and a worthy noble.<sup>36</sup> This while her half-brothers languished in Charles of Anjou's dungeons. It should also be noted that at no point in justifying their actions in Sicily did Constance or Peter ever appeal to the plight of her half-brothers. Did they not know or not care? Maliciously or otherwise, by abandoning her male siblings, Constance was able to solidify her sons' positions as future rulers of Sicily as well as the sole continuers of Frederick II's line. Enrico's, Frederick's, and Anselm's positions as captives suited the Aragonese queen in a way that their being hostages would not have done.

Before Constance is judged too harshly, we should try to reconstruct the likely course of events. When she insisted on Beatrice's release in 1284, it is unlikely that she or Peter knew that Helena's sons were still alive. Apart from years of rumours that they had been killed, Constance's aunt Anna had reported the same upon her arrival at the Aragonese court. It does appear, however, that by 1291 she was aware that her father's sons still lived and from that point forward we can try to synch up her actions on their behalf with documents uncovered by the primary eighteenth and nineteenth century Italian historians.<sup>37</sup>

Not coincidentally, Constance's knowledge about her half-brothers came during the period when Charles II and, afterwards, his sons, were hostages at the court of Peter III. This information put the king and queen of Aragon in something of a difficult position. On the one hand, the uncovering of additional prospective heirs would not have been welcome news as the pair was attempting to make good their own claim to southern Italy. On the other hand, the sudden discovery of brothers she had not known were alive, might have stirred feelings of family loyalty. Documents from 1291–2 call for better food, clothes, and living conditions for the children of Manfred, prince of Taranto, although Del Giudice argues that those orders were never carried out. He states that during the period of Charles II's captivity, Helena's sons endured 'the same manner of custody, the same loneliness, the same chains.'<sup>38</sup> This sequence of events also coincided with negotiations for the ultimately abortive Treaty of Tarascon, but would have been a natural opportunity for Constance to seek better conditions for her brothers.

By 1295, at the height of the negotiations for the Treaty of Anagni, other documents surface that call for not only better food and treatment, but the actual release of Helena's sons and their transport to the king's and the pope's presence in Anagni.<sup>39</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that these orders were ever carried out, but in the midst of the negotiations we can speculate that Constance and her son James thought to at least try and lighten the conditions under which her brothers were being detained even though it was not in their interest to see them released outright. If Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm had been transported to Anagni, they might have ended up in the custody of Boniface, a development that both the Angevins and the Aragonese would have been hesitant to see come to pass.

Finally, in 1297 with Boniface's injunction against the boys (now men) ever being released, Del Giudice is of the opinion that Constance, 'unable

to do more while respecting the papal injunction,' settled for a promise that her half-brothers would at least be freed from their chains and treated honourably.<sup>40</sup> Sadly, it appears that they were not. Charles's orders, sent to his son Robert in Naples were either ignored or deliberately countermanded, leaving Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm in the same situation as before.<sup>41</sup> No doubt, we cannot absolve Constance and Peter of their part in prolonging the misery of Helena's sons, though Constance made more of an effort of their behalf than either their mother's relatives or the holy Church. For that she should be acknowledged, if not unreservedly praised.

### *Beatrice*

And, finally, what of Beatrice herself? Manfred's and Helena's eldest child had apparently been allowed to remain with her mother until Helena's death in 1271. She was then transferred to Castel del'Uovo until her freedom was secured by Constance in 1284. While she too was kept closely confined, she certainly fared better than her siblings. *The Chronicle of Pedro of Aragon* describes how when informed of her husband's capture, Charles of Salerno's wife immediately summoned Beatrice, dressed her in expensive clothes and jewels and, reminding her that 'it is indeed true that I have loved and honoured thee, as far as in me lay, and I have at no time done thee aught to bring sorrow or distress' beseeched her to do whatever was in her power to seek fair treatment for Charles.<sup>42</sup> Did Beatrice also attempt to seek fair treatment for her little brothers, or did she too believe that they had died years earlier? The latter is almost without doubt true. She had not seen or heard any news of her brothers since their traumatic separation from her and their mother in March 1266. When Constance and Peter learned that the boys still lived, perhaps Beatrice was told as well, but the historical record leaves no trace of that.

Like her mother's captivity, Beatrice's experience at the hands of Charles I reflects the pragmatic reality that females with even tenuous claims to position and power were best kept in a controlled environment; the developments in and after 1284 resulting from Constance's marriage and transmission of her claims to Peter of Aragon are a perfect example of that kind of trouble. Unlike her mother, Beatrice's potential future value moderated her treatment; Charles elected to keep her alive and well while her brothers were left to rot in dank prisons. Beatrice's sex and perhaps her potential as a marriage partner may have been part of his motivation. Or, she may have been left in place as a possible future negotiating chip or even threat against Constance and Peter. In any event, unlike her mother and her siblings, by most definitions Beatrice was a hostage, and although no one formally designated her as such, that and her sex perhaps saved her long years of dark, miserable confinement.

### **Conclusions**

Despite their sex, elite status or age, the outcome for the family of Manfred of Sicily was likely set from the moment Manfred drew his last breath

at Benevento. Had Charles, and probably the papacy, not considered them threats, they would not have bothered to hunt them down. But, once they had been caught, what next? Manfred's family could have been hostages, but the only person with the power and strong inclination to negotiate for them was dead. They could have been held for ransom, but who would pay? Further, how much ransom would have been enough to offset the potential political dangers that the boys especially represented? And, if they had indeed been blinded soon after their capture, could Charles sitting on an as yet unstable throne have survived the outrage that could have been fomented as a result?

Helena and her children were in the dangerous position of captives and subject largely to whatever rules Charles elected to employ. And, if he were not already convinced of the dangers of live and free kinsmen of Manfred, the brief and bloody war with Conradin in 1267 graphically illustrated the problem. The last possible, realistic hope that Helena or her sons would ever again be free died in a town square in Naples in 1267 along with Conradin.

I have argued elsewhere that understanding the difference between captives and hostages is important since treatment of persons in the first group was often unpredictable, while hostages could usually depend upon being afforded certain protections. Looking at the outcomes for the family of Manfred of Sicily shows why this is true. As the lone person who could be classed as a hostage, Beatrice was well treated and she went on, as hostages often did, to enjoy a normal life. Two years after she regained her freedom, she was married, ironically to a man called Manfred, and had children of her own.<sup>43</sup> The story for the captives in the family was less bright.

Helena's pitiful existence for the last five years of her life as a prisoner of her husband's killer speaks for itself. As for her sons, their sex, and their status as captives as well as their unfortunate ties to the political morass of thirteenth-century Sicily sealed a fate that they neither created nor could possibly have understood. The outcome for these boys provides not only a picture of what could happen to even noble detainees, but it is also an explicit demonstration of the penalties that males were sometimes forced to pay for the privileges given their sex. As captives they were sacrificed on the altar of political pragmatism. As sons of a valiant father and extensions of a heralded lineage, their destiny was to suffer for the brilliance of their forebears.

## Notes

- 1 Hostages who were social and political elites formed a separate category of detainees who were most often used in diplomatic undertakings and as a result were generally treated according to a set of evolving customs and protocols including guarantees of their personal safety and sensitivity to their living conditions. However, for more common folk, being a hostage could be perilous work.
- 2 For the purposes of this paper, the term hostage will, unless otherwise indicated, apply either to those I class as domestic hostages: held as security for promises of neutrality, loyalty or support to the hostage-holder, or as hostage-brides: females held for potential use as partners in arranged marriages for political purposes.

The term captive will be used to describe persons taken as a result of warfare or abduction. They might be non-combatants, could be held for ransom, or could

be earmarked for execution, eventual release or permanent imprisonment and, unlike hostages, were less certain of honourable or humane treatment.

- 3 My thanks to former student Jack Goodman for bringing this incident to my attention as well as providing valuable insight on the matter. In this essay Charles will be referred to as Charles of Anjou to focus on his French origins as well as to distinguish him from his son, Charles of Salerno. However, after 1266, Charles of Anjou was also Charles I of Sicily and his son later succeeded him as Charles II (the lame).
- 4 Their father was Manfred of Sicily, but Constance was the daughter of Manfred's first wife, Beatrice of Savoy, and Beatrice was the daughter of Manfred's second wife, Helena.
- 5 Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers: A History of the Mediterranean World in the Later Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 43.
- 6 Without citation, the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (hereafter FMG) states that Flordelis was 'imprisoned with her sister at the Castel dell'Uovo, Naples, and was liberated after 18 years.' This would date her release to the same time as Beatrice's. However, the accounts of the births of Helena's younger children are difficult to verify and Flordelis—if indeed she did exist—might also have died without public notice while in captivity. Her biography requires more investigation which unfortunately falls outside the scope of this essay. 'Flordelis of Sicily,' FMG, last modified May 22, 2015, <http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#Manfreddied1266A>
- 7 The names and birth order of Helena's sons vary between sources. In this chapter they will be listed as Enrico, Frederick, and Anselm, born in that order. As with Flordelis, it is difficult to confirm their ages although Beatrice seems to have been the eldest child and Enrico the eldest son. The most likely date for Enrico's birth is May 1262, making him about 4 years old in 1266. 'Enrico of Sicily,' FMG, last modified May 22, 2015, <http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#Manfreddied1266A>
- 8 FMG states that: 'After his capture with his mother at Trani following his father's death, Enrico was blinded and imprisoned in chains in the Castel del Monte, near Bari' but does not provide supporting sources. This claim of blinding is considered later in the essay. 'Enrico of Sicily,' FMG, last modified May 22, 2015, [http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#\\_ftnref688](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#_ftnref688)
- 9 For the marriage of Frederick and Bianca see *Thomas Tusci Gesta Imperatorum et Pontificum*, MGH SS XXII, p. 517 cited [http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#\\_ftn653](http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/SICILY.htm#_ftn653). Frederick's will is detailed in Matthew Paris *English History: From the Year 1235 to 1273*, trans. Rev J A Giles (London: Henry Bohn, 1853) 2: 426–7.
- 10 Giuseppe Del Giudice, *La Famiglia Di Re Manfredi: Narrazione Storica, 2nd Edizione* (Naples: Pei Tipt de Michele d'Auria, 1896), 56.
- 11 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 80.
- 12 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, xxv. The Treaty of Viterbo in 1267 finally gave Charles possession of Corfu along with the rest of Helena's dower lands: Donald M. Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros 1267–1429* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 12.
- 13 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 83–5. Henry seems to have been less sure about the match than Charles and expressed interest in an alternate prize, the kingdom of Sardinia. Henry ultimately changed sides in the dispute over Sicily, throwing in his lot with Conradin in 1267 and suffered a lengthy imprisonment after Conradin was defeated.
- 14 Janet Ross, *The Land of Manfred* (London: John Murray 1889), 52–3.



- 15 Constance's father Frederick II used her to seal a political alliance with John III Doukas Vatatzes, emperor of Nicaea in 1244 and she took the name Anna. She was widowed in 1254, but not allowed to leave Nicaea until 1263; while there she was held as something of a hostage against actions of her brother, Manfred.
- 16 Constance did not accompany Helena and her children when they fled Lucera. She was initially detained when the city fell to Charles, but was later allowed to go to Aragon where she remained until her death in 1313. Del Giudice speculates that Constance, believing it to be true, would have taken the news of the boys' deaths to Peter and his wife, the children's half-sister. Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 137.
- 17 See Del Giudice's discussion of both archival and chronicle sources for the disposition of Helena's sons, *Manfredi*, 155–67. Domenico Forges-Davanzati reported, incorrectly, that at least one of Manfred's sons had died before 1297: *Dissertazione Sulla Seconda Moglie Del Re Manfredi E Su' Loro Figliuoli*, Domenico (Naples: Fillippo Raimonde, 1791), 68–9.
- 18 Donald M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady Ten Portraits, 1250–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22.
- 19 Forges-Davanzati, *Dissertazione*, 63–6.
- 20 Ross, *Land*, 52.
- 21 See the lengthy discussion of Charles II's orders concerning Helena's sons which begin to appear during his own captivity by the Aragonese: Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 241–50.
- 22 Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (Edinburgh: Longman, 1998), 181.
- 23 See Dunbabin, *Charles I*, 89–91 for this discussion.
- 24 Manfred's actions in seizing the throne over the interests of his nephew Conradin probably also served to weaken potential opposition by his German kin to the imprisonment of the boys; see Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 369. It is, however, possible that like others Manfred's German kin also believed that Manfred's children had been killed. We can only speculate how Conradin would have dealt with Manfred's sons had he been successful in his attempt to oust Charles of Anjou. Further, the children's disposition was also situated within the much broader and long-running Guelph-Ghibelline conflict in Italy. Nevertheless, while there may have been lukewarm enthusiasm for a child successor within any group, certain knowledge of the children's imprisonment in Charles's dungeons could have been used as one more grievance to whip up followers.
- 25 William Chester Jordan, *Europe in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Viking Press, 2001), 278.
- 26 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 146.
- 27 The secrecy surrounding the fates of Helena's children led some writers to challenge their legitimacy or even their existence. It was for this reason that Forges-Davanzati devoted a significant portion of his work on Manfred's family to proving that Manfred did indeed have a second marriage that produced three legitimate sons: *Dissertazione*, 50–4.
- 28 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 257.
- 29 This term was first used by Innocent IV in flatly refusing to make peace with anyone of Frederick II's lineage.
- 30 Matthew notes that after the death of Conrad in 1254, Innocent IV was convinced that there was 'no *legitimate* heir' to contest papal assumption of control of southern Italy and Sicily (my emphasis). No doubt then the appearance of Manfred, followed by Conradin, was particularly galling. If the papacy

- considered Manfred's illegitimacy (see note 9) a bar to kingship, that would no doubt have extended to his sons as well. However, as Manfred's successes in Italy illustrated, not everyone's view aligned with the papal perspective on that issue: Matthew, *Sicily*, 365.
- 31 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 146.
  - 32 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 250–1. Helena's sons might have fared somewhat better in papal custody since, unlike the Angevins and the Aragonese whose interests were best served by their continued clandestine imprisonment, Boniface could have used them as hostages against both camps.
  - 33 Ramon Muntaner, *Chronicle*, trans. Lady Goodenough (Cambridge, Ontario: In Parenthesis Publications, 2000), 107–8, 116, 201–3, [http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/muntaner\\_goodenough.pdf](http://www.yorku.ca/inpar/muntaner_goodenough.pdf)
  - 34 In Muntaner's account of the reunion of the sisters he notes that: 'It was piteous to behold, and it is no wonder for, since they had seen each other, they had lost King Manfred, and the Queen, *their mother*, and King Conradin and King Enzo, their uncles, and many other illustrious kinsmen': *Chronicle*, 237 (my emphasis). There is no mention of Helena—Beatrice's mother—or Beatrice's siblings. Note also the address of Infante Jaime at Messina listing the crimes of Charles I against the rights of the Queen and the people of Sicily. It details the deaths of Manfred, Enzo and Conradin, but there is no mention of Manfred's second family. Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 239.
  - 35 Bernat Desclot, *Chronicle of the Reign of King Pedro III of Aragon*, trans. F.L. Critchlow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1935), 177.
  - 36 Desclot, *Pedro III*, 180.
  - 37 Here, as throughout this chapter, reliance on eighteenth and nineteenth century research is crucial due to the burning of the Naples Historical Archive during the Four Days of Naples in September 1943.
  - 38 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 224.
  - 39 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 242–3; 249.
  - 40 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 251–2.
  - 41 Del Giudice, *Manfredi*, 250–55. A longstanding controversy continues as to whether Robert actually ordered the rations for Helena's son *reduced* or whether the orders were ignored by Charles's administrators who were being pressed to increase their contributions to the Angevin war effort. The latter explanation seems weak given the relatively small amount of money involved.
  - 42 Desclot, *Pedro III*, 178.
  - 43 Beatrice was married 3 June 1286 to Manfred IV of Saluzzo: 'Manfredo di Saluzzo,' FMG, last updated 19 June 2014, <http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/MONFERRATO,%20SALUZZO,%20SAVONA.htm#ManfredoIVSaluzzodied1340>

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# 10 The Royal Prisoner of Henry IV and Henry V

## James I of Scotland, 1406–24

*Gordon McKelvie*

James I of Scotland was not a hostage but a prisoner and therefore his inclusion in this volume requires justification.<sup>1</sup> Adam Kosto noted the distinction between prisoners and hostages, stating that a hostage was the ‘*guarantor of an agreement*, and thus distinct from the captive, prisoner, or prisoner of war.’<sup>2</sup> The distinction is clear: hostages were those given as collateral to ensure the fulfilment of an agreement such as payment of ransom, while prisoners of war were those captured as part of the chivalric warrior ethos of the medieval nobility that attempted to mitigate the excesses of warfare and limit the number of deaths on the battlefield.<sup>3</sup> Kosto’s distinction between a hostage and captive, however, is unclear because hostages were in captivity. Kosto himself notes that during the Middle Ages ‘the physical control over people remained crucial.’<sup>4</sup> Despite differences in the way in which they became captives, it is difficult to imagine that the experiences of hostages and prisoners differed to any significant extent. Rémy Ambühl has noted that contemporary conventions and ideals ‘expected [captors] to secure an appropriate place and conditions of detention.’<sup>5</sup> What really mattered was not a person’s legal status but their social status. This is evident in the case of James I of Scotland who was a high status prisoner and had to be treated according to his status. James was only twelve years old when he was captured by pirates off the Norfolk coast. The capture occurred during a period of truce between Scotland and England. Therefore, James was not an active participant in warfare and was not technically a prisoner of war. Thereafter he was held captive by successive English kings for eighteen years until his release in 1424. The records of the English government permit an analysis of his time in English captivity which sheds light upon the experience of many medieval captives, both hostages and prisoners. It is for this reason that a discussion of his time as a prisoner in England is pertinent to this volume.

Additionally, this article redresses a historiographical imbalance. While the records of James’s captivity were produced in England, they have been predominantly examined from a Scottish perspective by historians interpreting James’s capture and subsequent captivity in light of the style and ideology of his kingship once he returned to Scotland in 1424. Although historians

of the reign have differed on interpretations, their primary focus has been James's attacks on noble power, centralising tendencies and attempts to enhance the image of the Stewart monarchy.<sup>6</sup> The most recent overview of late medieval Scotland has claimed that James's capture 'had the single most significant impact upon Scottish politics over the next half-century and it entirely changed the dynamics of Stewart kingship.'<sup>7</sup> Historians of England, in contrast, have largely neglected James's captivity and many biographies of Henry IV and Henry V contain only fleeting references to James.<sup>8</sup> The negotiations for his release and the choice of those who would be hostages to ensure the payment of his ransom have recently been considered in broader European contexts of hostageships and ransom culture.<sup>9</sup> Thus far, James's period in captivity has not been considered in its own right. This article therefore examines: the unusual nature of his capture during a period of truce; the impact of the debates over English royal finance during the reign of Henry IV on the conditions in which James lived; and the way in which English kings, particularly Henry V, made political capital out of his captivity.

## Capture

James was taken prisoner by English pirates in late March 1406 and was subsequently handed over to Henry IV. In theory, this act was contrary to the laws of war since it occurred during a period of truce between Scotland and England, a point that contemporaries understood. The fifteenth-century Scottish chroniclers Andrew Wynton and Walter Bower highlighted the fact that James was captured during a period of truce<sup>10</sup> while the parliament roll of 1406 has no mention of the event, possibly due to potential embarrassment of breaking a truce.<sup>11</sup> He was not a prisoner of war because there was no war and neither he, nor his father, had voluntarily agreed for him to become a hostage. James had become a prisoner of the king of England by being kidnapped. If his capture was illegal, then, in theory, he should not have been kept prisoner. The most plausible explanation why James remained imprisoned despite the illegality of his capture was the fact that 'no medieval truce was ever properly observed, and . . . no one expected it to be.'<sup>12</sup> In certain, but not all, situations political circumstances and potential advantages took precedent over ideals pertaining to the conduct of warfare. The opportunity to keep imprisoned the heir, and subsequently king, of a traditionally hostile kingdom was too inviting a prospect to forgo and trumped contemporary expectations regarding the laws of war. As discussed later, James was only released when his return to Scotland was deemed to be advantageous to the English government.

While the act of taking James prisoner was a consequence of the opportunism of English pirates, the circumstances which placed him in that situation and kept him in prison for eighteen years were the result of internal strife within Scotland during the reign of his father, Robert III. His elder brother, David, duke of Rothesay, had died, probably by being starved to

death after he was imprisoned by his uncle, Robert, duke of Albany, and the earl of Douglas. The ensuing political turmoil resulted in Robert III allowing his 'immediate fears for his son's physical safety' to make 'a hasty judgement' to send James to France.<sup>13</sup> Michael Brown has noted the long-term impact these events had upon the Scottish political community, suggesting that 'the first twelve years of James's life probably instilled in him a determination to change the balance of power in which the nobility dominated.'<sup>14</sup> James's imprisonment brought about long-term consequences for the Scottish political community, but there were no immediate consequences as his uncle, Albany, ran the kingdom as governor and even issued charters in his own name.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary chronicles indicate that Albany was a popular figure, stating how he had governed Scotland in the king's absence wisely and in 'an honourable fashion.'<sup>16</sup>

Despite praise for the way in which he governed Scotland, Albany's personal ambition does seem to have rendered him unconcerned about his king's plight and negotiations for James's release frequently stalled. Norman MacDougall has warned against imposing too cynical an interpretation on Albany's actions, noting that 'there was no way in which he could dictate events' and that James's release was contingent on 'English willingness to let him go.'<sup>17</sup> Both Henry IV and Henry V were reluctant to easily release such a prized prisoner, although it is plausible that contemporaries, or at least James himself, interpreted Albany's actions in these treasonable terms. In 1416 Benedict Wolman was accused of sedition for stating there was collusion between Albany and Henry V whereby the Scots would not permit the return of Richard II to his kingdom in the same manner than Henry refused to release James.<sup>18</sup> This was part of the persistent rumour that Richard II was alive and living in Scotland. It is uncertain whether or not James knew of this particular case of sedition. However, Albany's apparent reluctance to obtain James's release was at the very least plausible rhetoric, even though this particular criticism was a by-product of broader criticisms in England of the Lancastrian regime.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, it was conceivable to contemporaries that Albany was preventing James from fulfilling his role as king, which is further suggested in James's actions after returning to Scotland. The execution of Albany's son and heir as governor, Murdoch Stewart along with his own son, Walter Stewart, and father-in-law, at the parliament of 1425, partially had its roots in resentment caused by Albany's perceived lackadaisical approach to his release.<sup>20</sup> While direct evidence of James's exact motivations is not readily available, it is plausible that he, rightly or wrongly, attributed, at least in part, the length of time he spent as prisoner on the Albany Stewarts.

### **Life as a Captive and English Royal Finance**

Although the machinery of Scottish royal government continued under Albany's governorship, James was not entirely isolated from events in Scotland. His regular household was mainly comprised of 'Scots of more limited political importance' from around 1413, yet he remained in correspondence

with several leading magnates.<sup>21</sup> The real importance of these years, however, was not his contact with the Scottish nobility and royalty, but his contact with the English royal court and government. One of James I's most commented upon qualities was his ability as a scholar and taste for extravagant court culture, with the authorship of *The Kingis Quair* being cited as his most notable literary achievement.<sup>22</sup> Bower noted that it was during his time as a prisoner that James took upon himself the opportunity to study, amongst other things, literature and philosophy and to develop his artistic tastes.<sup>23</sup> Sixteenth-century writers such as John Maior and Hector Boece maintained the narrative that James was educated at the English court.<sup>24</sup> Some linked the development of these cultural tastes to his good personal relations with his captors. *The Dethe of the Kynge of Scotis* states that Henry V treated James as favourably as a father treated a son.<sup>25</sup> The text survives as an English translation by John Shirley from an unknown Latin text, although the original author had some familiarity with Scottish politics during this period.<sup>26</sup> It is impossible to determine whether the claim that Henry favoured James like a son was made in the original Latin text or was added by Shirley either as an attempt to portray the English king in a good light or was part of an oral tradition circulating around the city of London during the 1430s and 1440s. Shirley's sentiment was echoed by Boece in the sixteenth century who described the 'beneuolence of King Hary [IV]' who instructed James 'in verteu & science.'<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, fifteenth-century English chronicles are rather terse in their descriptions of James's life in captivity and many omit his capture and imprisonment altogether. Thomas Walsingham noted how, on being presented with his young prisoner, Henry IV joked that there was no need for James to be sent to France, since he spoke French himself and could educate James personally.<sup>28</sup> No further mention of James's time in England is made in Walsingham's chronicle. Indeed, narrative sources from this period provide little discussion of James's time in England or the impact of his English education. One of the earliest assessments of the impact of James's time at the English court by an English chronicler was by Edward Hall in the sixteenth century. Hall did not doubt the positive influence of James's imprisonment, stating that he was 'garnished with lernyng and ciuilities (whiche thynges were rare and straunge before that time, within the realme of Scotland).'<sup>29</sup> Hall was following in an older English tradition that viewed the Celtic lands as being inhabited by barbarous and uncivilised people.<sup>30</sup> These views reveal more about perceptions of the stereotypical Scotsman rather than any historical reality. Late medieval Scotland was no social or cultural backwater. The royal courts of the early Stewarts, even though modest compared with those of France, England and Burgundy, had some level of sophistication and several cultural merits, most notably John Barbour's epic vernacular poem *The Bruce* which was composed during the 1370s, several years before Chaucer produced the *Canterbury Tales*.<sup>31</sup> The young captive's new surroundings would have been familiar to him in some respects and unfamiliar in others. There were two broad differences between Scottish



and English kings in this period: their respective wealth, and therefore the scale of court life; and the centralisation of their government.<sup>32</sup> However, it was the immediate politics of the reigns of Henry IV and Henry V that had a greatest impact on James's period in England as opposed to any broad structural differences regarding centralised government and royal finance.

During his captivity James was provided with a daily allowance by the English crown. Ranald Nicholson described the amount given to James as a 'pittance',<sup>33</sup> but it must be noted that James's status as king was always recognised in the sums of money given to him. He was initially put into custody with the sons of the Welsh rebel Owain Glyn Dŵr and given a daily allowance of 6s 8d [i.e., 1 mark] which was double the amount given to each of the Welsh princes.<sup>34</sup> This constituted an annual allowance of £121 13s 4d which was the equivalent to the income of the greater knights.<sup>35</sup> The amount was enough for a comfortable existence for James but was inadequate for royal extravagance. Moreover, the allowance can also be considered in context of early fifteenth-century English politics, in terms of political ideals and expectations and immediate practical concerns. The fact that James was given double the amount of his fellow prisoners reflects a dominant expectation of early fifteenth-century political society, namely a respect for well-defined social stratification. During the preceding century, the classifications of gentry ranks became more rigorously defined while the forms used to address the king became more exalted which developed 'a loftier image of kingship' in England.<sup>36</sup> This preoccupation with social status was expressed in law with the 1413 statute of additions which stated that the status of occupation of all persons named in legal documents was to be noted.<sup>37</sup> Recognition of James's status as king continued during the reign of Henry V. The warrant for a payment of £106 33s 4d made to Sir William Bourchier, constable of the Tower of London, on 18 March 1416 that stated that James was given a daily allowance of 13s 4d from 28 January 1416 and that 17 prisoners taken at the siege of Harfleur were given a daily allowance of 26s 8d.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, the French prisoners were given on average a daily allowance of between 18d and 19d, with discrepancies being the result of differences in the social status of particular prisoners. If James returned to Scotland in 1424 with a more exalted conception of kingship than his father and grandfather had, then one of the key influences of his English captivity was a respect for rigorously defined social status that was evident to him in the daily allowance he received in contrast to his fellow prisoners of inferior status.

Royal finances, and in particular the expenditure on the royal household, also influenced the amount of money given to James. On 14 August 1406 a payment of £44 7s 10d was made to Richard Spice, lieutenant to the constable of the Tower of London, Sir Thomas Rempstone, for the expenses of James, his household and other prisoners.<sup>39</sup> Crucially, this does not specify a daily allowance. The first payment to specify that James was allocated a daily allowance of 6s 8d was made on 10 December 1406.<sup>40</sup> Two days earlier parliament had succeeded in persuading Henry IV to appoint Sir

John Tiptoft as keeper of the wardrobe,<sup>41</sup> which suggests that parliamentary debates affected the amount of money allocated to James. The parliament was the climax of the debate between the king and the Commons over issues such as the royal household and the use of crown revenues. Officials in the royal household 'and of all other places and offices in which the revenues of the kingdom are spent' were to be personally responsible for royal finances. Royal expenditure had become an issue of national importance, taken out of the king's hand and placed in control of the council of which Prince Henry was 'the nominal head.' Among the other articles, it was stated that no one was to receive a gift from the king from the following 17 December until the end of the next parliament anything that had not been granted to them before that particular parliament.<sup>42</sup> The perceived meagreness of James's allowance must have been due to the fact that he was captured at a time when pressure was being put upon Henry IV to reduce the costs of his household and living. This fits within the broader context of prisoner's expenses that had to reconcile the expectation that prisoners were treated according to their status with financial realities. In the 1420s and 1430s the expenses for the duke of Orléan, the counts of Eu and Richemond along with Marshal Boucicaut all had their daily expenses cut when the financial burden was deemed excessive.<sup>43</sup> The daily expenses given to the king of a realm that was traditionally hostile to England was an easy saving to make.

Three further payments for the expenses of James were made on 24 October 1408, 23 May 1409 and 16 July 1409. All were made to Richard, lord Grey of Codnor, lieutenant of the Tower of London for the expenses of James and other prisoners, notably Gruffudd, son of Owain Glyn Dŵr.<sup>44</sup> No set daily allowance is recorded, but it is difficult to imagine that there was any change, or at least any significant change, to James's daily allowance. The next known payment was £30 on 27 June 1413 for the expenses of James himself, the son of Owain Glyndŵr and various other prisoners.<sup>45</sup> The four-year gap coincides with Sir Thomas Brounfleet's period as keeper of the wardrobe, suggesting that the king's wardrobe was not paying for the keeping of James during the final four years of Henry IV's reign. Christopher Given-Wilson has noted that, although Brounfleet was able 'to keep expenses down to an even lower level than had Tiptoft,' his 'problems increased rather than diminished as his period of office continued.'<sup>46</sup> The fact that eleven payments were made between 27 June 1413 and 22 February 1414<sup>47</sup> suggests that payments to James's jailors lapsed during the final years of Henry IV's reign and resumed in the early years of Henry V's reign.

There is further evidence to suggest an element of comparative destitution in James's living conditions by the start of Henry V's reign. His cousin, and fellow captive, Murdoch Stewart, with whom he was held between 1413 and 1415, complained that his mattress and blankets had not been changed for two years and had begun to rot.<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that the complaint was made by Murdoch, not James, and it is therefore not certain that James experienced similar conditions. What is clear is that after this complaint, and the release of Murdoch in 1415, there was an improvement

in the provisions given to James. At some point between 14 December 1415 and 18 March 1416 a payment of £421 2s 11½*d* was made to Sir John Pelham, James's custodian, as part of the king's £700 yearly allowance for 'sustenance and clothing.'<sup>49</sup> This represented an increase of almost six times what James's annual allowance was during Henry IV's reign, but this dramatic increase did not last long, presumably because this was a one-off payment that was part of a wider remedy of English royal finance. The next recorded daily allowance given to James was 13s 4*d* (i.e., 2 marks), noted in the payment made to William Bourchier on 18 March 1416,<sup>50</sup> which constitutes an annual allowance of £243 14s 8*d*, thus doubling the annual allowance allocated to him in 1406. The doubling of his annual allowance, in contrast, is best explained by late medieval attitudes towards age and the life-cycle. By 1415 James had reached his twenty-first birthday and was therefore of full age which was reflected in his increase in living allowance. However, it would be naïve to interpret the doubling of his income as simply the product of altruistic generosity by Henry V who, to a greater extent than his father, used James for political and legal gains.

### Political Use

Having a king in one's possession brought about significant political opportunities. Edward III recognised this when he had both the king of France, Jean II, and the king of Scotland, David II, as prisoners. Mark Ormrod has noted that Edward III strived to obtain as large a ransom as possible for both rulers while maintaining long-term territorial and regnal claims in both France and Scotland.<sup>51</sup> David II, along with other prisoners of war, was trotted out at 'the spectacular' tournament at Windsor in 1348,<sup>52</sup> while the arrival in London of Jean II of France after his capture at Poitiers in 1356 was welcomed on a scale previously unknown with the citizens of London who were 'arrayed in their best style, with every craft in a uniform livery.'<sup>53</sup> These public displays were a form of propaganda designed to highlight Edward III's power, authority and English military successes. Henry IV does not seem to have used James in any similar manner. Presumably, James was present at certain court events and feasts, but there is little indication that Henry IV attempted to make significant political capital from this.<sup>54</sup> James seems to have been kept in relatively secure royal castles such as Windsor, Nottingham, Pevensey and Kenilworth under the custody of staunch Lancastrian supporters such as Richard, lord Grey of Codnor.<sup>55</sup>

Henry V, in contrast, did make visual use of James in court ceremonies, a tactic that was most evident at the coronation of Catherine de Valois in 1421. One chronicler states that during the feast James was sitting to the left of the queen and 'atte euery course wasse serued aftur þat the queen and the bisshoppes were serued.'<sup>56</sup> Henry's marriage to Catherine de Valois, and her coronation as queen, was the immediate display of his military success in France that led to the Treaty of Troyes which, along with giving him a French bride, made him heir apparent to Charles VI of France.<sup>57</sup> The visual

display of having the king of Scots at his side further emphasised his authority and success. This attempt to bring James closer to the centre of royal government began at the start of Henry V's reign. On the day he acceded to the throne Henry ordered that James along with Murdoch Stewart, earl of Fife and William Gyffard be moved to the Tower of London.<sup>58</sup> This action has traditionally been interpreted as an oppressive act in which Henry was attempting to keep James under closer supervision.<sup>59</sup> However, when considered in light of subsequent events it may be possible to detect James's move to the Tower of London as the first of several steps in which Henry was drawing the young king more firmly into the orbit of English royal government. Being held in secure royal castles far from London would not have given James the direct experience of English royal government he obtained while in London during the reign of Henry V.

Henry V, however, only enjoyed a qualified success in his political use of James. One of the main reasons for taking hostages was for them to act as a guarantee for the actions of another person, usually as payment of a ransom. In contrast, prisoners were taken during periods of conflict, although like a hostage, having a prisoner in captivity may have had a coercive element by inhibiting certain actions of the prisoner supporters or subjects. James I's imprisonment failed to alter Scottish foreign policy in a manner favourable to England. In fact, it was during James's period as prisoner in England that Scottish military assistance to France peaked. Bower claimed that in 1419 the earl of Buchan led 7,000 soldiers to France while Archibald, fourth earl of Douglas, led 10,000 men in 1423.<sup>60</sup> Modern estimates suggest that in total around 15,000 Scottish soldiers were recruited to the Dauphin's army between 1419 and 1424.<sup>61</sup> The imprisonment that seems to have had an impact on Scottish foreign policy was that of Albany's son, Murdoch Stewart, who was released in February 1416,<sup>62</sup> since it was only after Murdoch's release that Scottish military assistance to the French peaked. Even then Murdoch Stewart's imprisonment should not be overstated, as Scotland continued to aid the French effort when Murdoch was in prison, as was the case when a Scottish force under the command of the earl of Douglas, burned Penrith in 1415.<sup>63</sup> At best, Murdoch's imprisonment was only a minor restraint on Scottish support for the French.

Although having the Scottish king a prisoner did not deter the Scots from assisting the Dauphin, the prospect of having James in an English army gave Henry V options in his conduct of the French wars. Seven payments were made to James himself between 13 May 1419 and 1 April 1421 for various expenses connected to Henry's French campaigns.<sup>64</sup> Four further payments totalling £226 were made to John Rolleston, keeper of the wardrobe, for James's military expenses.<sup>65</sup> The wardrobe account for the final year of Henry V's reign in 1422 also shows that three payments were made totalling £648 9s 5½d.<sup>66</sup> These payments were part of Henry's policy during the final years of his reign to include James in his French campaigns. Henry's efforts came to fruition at Melun in 1420 when he used James's presence as legal justification for the mass execution of the city's Scottish garrison. Henry had

historical precedents for executing Scottish soldiers as rebels. During the Wars of Independence prominent Scots were executed for treason against their overlord, Edward I, and were therefore regarded as subjects of the English king who had committed treason.<sup>67</sup> English claims to overlordship over Scotland persisted throughout the late medieval period,<sup>68</sup> but were never as potent as they were during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. As Jean-Philippe Genet has noted, to the English Scotland was 'still considered a vassal land, whereas to the papacy and other European rulers, it was an independent kingdom.'<sup>69</sup> Having the Scottish king at his side during the siege enabled Henry to circumvent the need to prove overlordship; the fact that they were fighting against an army of which their own king was a part provided Henry with ample justification to execute the Scots garrison since they were bearing arms against their rightful king. Within contemporary understanding of treason the execution of the Scots guard at Melun was justifiable. Henry V had made optimal use of his royal prisoner.

The death of Henry V in 1422 again changed the dynamic of James's captivity. James attended Henry V's funeral at Westminster abbey and was financially supported by the English exchequer from February 1423 to January 1424 receiving £277.<sup>70</sup> Much of these expenses pertained to the final potential use which James had in his role as an unmarried king who lacked an heir and who was the head of a dynasty that was only beginning to establish itself. On 12 February 1424 James married Joan Beaufort, niece of Cardinal Henry Beaufort, then chancellor of England. The marriage was, by medieval standards, atypical since there seems to have been genuine affection between James and Joan,<sup>71</sup> but this was purely fortuitous since the marriage was first and foremost a political agreement. Although a royal marriage was not an absolute guarantee of peace between two kingdoms, it could 'create long-standing communication networks across borders.'<sup>72</sup> Henry VI's minority government attempted to exploit these connections as was evident when Cardinal Beaufort led an English embassy to negotiate the Anglo-Scottish truce, which was agreed in 1430.<sup>73</sup> When the Anglo-Scottish truce was breached, it was Joan's brother, Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset, who, in 1433, was sent to Scotland to discuss breaches of the truce.<sup>74</sup> It is clear that the English royal government tried to utilise family connections with James, created by his marriage to Joan Beaufort, when conducting negotiations. Attempts to exploit the potential of these marriage ties failed in the long term. James renewed the Franco-Scottish alliance in 1427, marrying his own daughter to the Dauphin<sup>75</sup> and mounted a failed attempt to retake Roxburgh castle in October 1436.<sup>76</sup> The marriage failed in its objective of pacifying the Scots and by 1440 had become a source of criticism for Cardinal Beaufort. His rival Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, accused Beaufort of acting without parliamentary authority 'to the greet defrudacion of you highness [Henry VI], and al to wedde his nece to the saide kyng [of Scots],' which was one of several criticisms that Gloucester made against Beaufort.<sup>77</sup> It is only in hindsight, however, that the marriage can be regarded as a failure. When the marriage agreement was made, it was perfectly conceivable that the Scottish border could be pacified for several decades.

In March 1424 James confirmed his freedom in return for a ransom of £40,000<sup>78</sup> and began his personal rule in Scotland that lasted thirteen years until his assassination on 20 February 1437. His eighteen years as a prisoner-king was longer than the time he spent in personal control of the Scottish royal government. Taxes levied in order to pay the ransom failed to produce a sufficient yield<sup>79</sup> and what was collected was re-routed for more extravagant purchases which A.A.M Duncan described as 'a reckless spending spree.'<sup>80</sup> An example of something that could be regarded as 'reckless spending' is the fact that James sent his furs to Flanders to be cleaned.<sup>81</sup> Other purchases include jewellery, velvet, tapestry with the king's arms, armour, spices and silks for himself and his queen, along with Rhine wine from Dordrecht.<sup>82</sup> In reality, much of James's later spending needs to be considered in the context in which he was brought up, namely the English royal court and his spending was an attempt to place the Stewart royal family more firmly within the wider European framework. Indeed, it was the eighteen years James spent as a prisoner in England that afforded him the opportunity to observe other royal courts, probably consider how they could be replicated in Scotland and gauge their financial cost. Moreover, it is unlikely that the taxes raised would ever have been spent on paying the ransom. As Gerald Harriss noted, both England and Scotland knew that 'James had neither the means nor the need to pay,' since any threat of aggression from the English to ensure payment 'would only drive James more deeply into the French camp.'<sup>83</sup> He was even excused paying half of his ransom when released as this was covered by Joan Beaufort's dowry.<sup>84</sup> Political and financial realities dictated that James would eventually have to be released since he would only become a financial burden if he remained a prisoner for this life. His release and marriage to an English bride was the best opportunity that the English had of pacifying the Scots, even if it was not a success. James's release, like his captivity, was determined by English political expedients.

## Conclusion

This article has considered three aspects of James I of Scotland's captivity in England, all of which need to be viewed within the wider context of the taking of prisoners in late medieval Europe and compared with the practice of hostage taking. James became a prisoner because of internal strife within Scotland rather than during a period of Anglo-Scottish warfare. Opportunism on the part of English pirates, coupled with a failure to observe an Anglo-Scottish truce led to his captivity. Once he was a prisoner it was political considerations that determined his life as a prisoner. These political considerations were different during the reigns of the first two Lancastrian kings. During the reign of Henry IV, the fact James was a minor and pressure to reduce royal expenditure led to him being given a lower daily allowance than may have been expected. When Henry V became king he increased his allowance, partially due to the fact James reached his majority and partially due to the fact that Henry was bringing James closer into the



centre of royal government. Henry V also exploited the fact he had the king of Scots as his prisoner to a much greater extent than his father had, using him for political purposes and as legal justification for the execution of the Scottish garrison at Melun. James was released after his marriage to an English bride in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt by Henry VI's minority government to pacify the Scots, which also meant they no longer needed to pay for James's upkeep. His experience as a prisoner was intimately bound-up with politics of the early Lancastrian government.

Furthermore, this examination has implications for understanding the differences and similarities between hostages and prisoners. Hostages were taken as part of a negotiation in order to ensure that agreements, such as ransom payments, were kept. Prisoners, in contrast, were not taken as part of a bargaining process but were instead taken in the heat of battle or, in the case of James I, during opportunistic skirmishes during a period of truce. No medieval king could offer himself as a hostage due to the personal nature of medieval government and no one could suggest their king become a hostage. Such an act effectively prevented a rightful king from ruling and therefore could only be interpreted as treason. The way in which James, and indeed other kings, became prisoners was different from the way hostages went into captivity. This is the main difference between prisoners and hostages that an examination of James I's captivity highlights. Other aspects of his captivity can, in contrast, be viewed as similar to hostages. The finances of the English crown, and English politics more generally, had a clear impact upon James's living conditions. The comparatively low amount of money allocated to him during Henry IV's reign was part of wider attempts at cutting royal finance while the increase in his allowance by Henry V reflects both the fact he had reached his majority and Henry V's attempts to bring James more closely into the orbit of English royal government. These financial and political considerations were present whether there was a hostage or prisoner in captivity that required keeping. Indeed, the overall cost of keeping a prisoner, including the maintenance of the hostage who replaces him, had an effect on the final ransom amount.<sup>85</sup> James I's experience as a prisoner may not be comparable to the experiences of many hostages because of the way in which he became a captive and his royal status, but it does highlight the fact that politics and finance had a direct impact on the experience of medieval captives, whether they were a hostage or a prisoner.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Professor Michael Hicks for reading and commenting on earlier drafts of this article. My interest in this topic was sparked during my M.Litt degree at the University of Glasgow in 2008–9. I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Dauvit Broun and Professor Graeme Small for their help and supervision during my M.Litt which formed the basis for my initial research into this article.
- 2 Kosto, 9. I would like to thank Dr Rémy Ambühl for some useful discussions on this point.



- 3 On the importance of chivalric ethos in mitigating the excesses of warfare see especially: Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London: Yale University Press, 1984), 219–37.
- 4 Kosto, 2.
- 5 Rémy Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 259.
- 6 Michael Brown, *James I* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1994), 17–24; Ranald Nicholson, *Scotland: The Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1974), 229–60, *passim*; Katie Stevenson, *Chivalry and Knighthood in Scotland, 1424–1513* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 2, 70, 170; E.W.M. Balfour-Melville, *James I King of Scots* (London: Methuen, 1936), 28–105 provides the most detailed discussion of the period in which James was a prisoner in England.
- 7 Katie Stevenson, *Power and Propaganda: Scotland, 1306–1488* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 37.
- 8 E.g. J.L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London: Constable, 1970), 195, 210; Ian Mortimer, *The Fears of Henry IV: The Life of England's Self-Made King* (London: Vintage, 2007), 307, 314, 318, 361, 363; Keith Dockray, *Henry V* (Stroud: The History Press, 2004), 83, 103, 229; Christopher Allmand, *Henry V* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 152–3, 157, 162, 308.
- 9 Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 61; Kosto, 192–8.
- 10 Bower, viii, 61; Andrew Wynton, *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*, ed. D. Laing, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872–9), iii, 92.
- 11 As suggested by in Christopher Given-Wilson et al., eds., *Parliamentary Rolls of Medieval England*, 16 vols. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), viii, 320 [hereafter *PROME*].
- 12 M.H. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 214.
- 13 Stephen Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings: Robert II and Robert III, 1371–1406* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell, 1996), 291.
- 14 Brown, *James I*, 17.
- 15 Alexander Grant, *Independence and Nationhood: Scotland, 1306–1469* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 184–7. For a recent discussion of Albany's governorship see: Karen Hunt, 'The Governorship of Robert Duke of Albany (1406–1424)' in *Scottish Kingship, 1306–1542*, eds. Michael Brown and Roland Tanner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), 126–54.
- 16 Bower, viii, 131–5; Wynton, *Orygynale Cronykil* iii, 98–9.
- 17 Norman MacDougall, *An Antidote to the English: The Auld Alliance, 1295–1560* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 60.
- 18 City of London Record Office, Letter Book I, fol. 180, cited in Simon Walker, 'Rumour, Sedition and Popular Protest in the Reign of Henry IV,' *Past and Present*, 166 (2000): 54.
- 19 See in particular: Walker, 'Rumour,' 31–65.
- 20 For a modern discussion of these events see: Brown, *James I*, 60–7.
- 21 Brown, *James I*, 18–20, quotation on 18; E.W.M Balfour-Melville, 'Five Letters of James I,' *Scottish Historical Review*, 20 (1922): 28–33.
- 22 James I of Scotland, *The Kingis Quair*, ed. John Norton-Smith (Leiden: Brill, 1981), xix—'the repetitious contesting of James's authorship of *The Kingis Quair* . . . is largely academic manufacture'.
- 23 Bower, viii, 309–13.
- 24 John Maior, *A History of Greater Britain* (Scottish History Society, 1892), 336; John Bellenden, trans., *The Chronicles of Scotland Compiled by Hector Boece, translated into Scots by John Bellenden, 1531* (Edinburgh: W. and C. Tait, 1941), 368–9.
- 25 *Dethe*, 25.

- 26 Ibid, 20–1.
- 27 *Chronicles of Scotland*, 368.
- 28 David Preest, ed., *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham (1379–1422)* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 341.
- 29 H. Ellis, ed., *Hall's Chronicle; Containing the History of England during the Reign of Henry the Fourth and Succeeding Monarchs to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth* (London: J. Johnson etc., 1809), 186.
- 30 R.R. Davies, *The First English Empire: Power and Identities in the British Isles, 1093–1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 113–41.
- 31 John Barbour, *The Bruce*, ed. A.A.M Duncan (Edinburgh: Canongate Classics, 1997), 2–4. Stephen Boardman, 'Robert II,' in *Scottish Kingship, 1306–1542*, eds. Michael Brown and Roland Tanner (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2008), 72–108 highlights the cultural patronage of the early Stewart kings, arguing that during this period Scotland could not be viewed as a cultural backwater. For a continental perspective on the late medieval Scottish royal court see: Graeme Small, 'The Scottish court in the fifteenth century: the view from Burgundy' in *La cour de Bourgogne et l'Europe: Le rayonnement et les limites d'un modèle culturel*, ed. Werner Paravicini (Thorbecke, 2013), 455–72.
- 32 Grant, *Independence*, 147–70 notes these differences but argues that the lack of centralisation should not equate to thinking that Scotland was inadequately governed in comparison to England.
- 33 Nicholson, *Late Medieval Scotland*, 281.
- 34 Bain, IV, nos. 727, 740, 769, 777.
- 35 Gerald Harriss, *Shaping the Nation: England, 1360–1461* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 138.
- 36 Nigel Saul, 'Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship,' *English Historical Review* 110 (1995), 863; Nigel Saul, *Knights and Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 3–29.
- 37 *PROME*, xiv, 324–5.
- 38 Bain, IV, no. 874.
- 39 Ibid, no. 723.
- 40 Ibid, no. 727.
- 41 *PROME*, viii, 323.
- 42 Ibid, viii, 368–70. See also: G.L. Harriss, 'Financial Policy,' in *Henry V: The Practice of Kingship*, ed. G.L. Harriss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 160–2; Christopher Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England, 1360–1413* (London: Yale University Press, 1986), 116, 129–30.
- 43 Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 137–8.
- 44 Bain, IV, no. 781, 784.
- 45 Ibid, no. 846.
- 46 Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, 109–10.
- 47 Bain, IV, no. 846, 850, 852.
- 48 H. Nicholas, ed., *Proceedings of the Privy Council*, 7 vols. (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1834–7), ii, 337–8 [hereafter PPC]; Brown, *James I*, 19–20.
- 49 Bain, IV, no. 874.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 W. Mark Ormrod, *Edward III* (London: Yale University Press, 2011), 385–413.
- 52 'Edward was undoubtedly displaying David as a war trophy': Michael Penman, *David II, 1329–71*, new edition (Tuckwell: East Linton, 2004), 151. See also Ormrod, *Edward III*, 334.
- 53 G.H. Martin, ed. and trans., *Knigh-ton's Chronicle, 1337–1396* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 151.
- 54 One notable exception of his presence at a judicial duel between Bertran Usana and John Bolomer on 12 August 1407. Stevenson, *Chivalry*, 70.

- 55 Brown, *James I*, 20; Given-Wilson, *Royal Household*, 194.
- 56 William Marx, ed., *An English Chronicle 1377–1461* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), 56.
- 57 *EHD IV, 1327–1485*, ed. A.R. Myers (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), 225–6.
- 58 Bain, IV, no. 837.
- 59 Brown, *James I*, 20.
- 60 Bower, viii, 113, 125,
- 61 David Ditchburn, *Scotland and Europe: the medieval kingdom and its contacts with Christendom, c.1215–1545*. Vol. 1, *Religion, culture and commerce*, (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 226; MacDougall, *Antidote*, 59–69.
- 62 Bower, viii, 85.
- 63 Michael Brown, *The Black Douglasses* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 1998), 214–16.
- 64 Bain, IV, nos. 892, 895, 898, 908.
- 65 *Ibid*, nos. 895, 898.
- 66 *Ibid*, no. 918.
- 67 Matthew Strickland, ‘Treason, Feud and the Growth of State Violence: Edward I and the “War of the Earl of Carrick,” 1306–7,’ in *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles, c.1150–1500*, eds. Christopher Given-Wilson, Ann Kettle and Len Scales (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2008), 84–113.
- 68 Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell, eds. and trans., *Gesta Henrici Quinti: The Deeds of Henry the Fifth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 138, states that the Scottish embassy sent to negotiate for James’s release failed because the Scots refused to do homage and other rights due to the crown of England.
- 69 Jean-Philippe Genet, ‘Scotland in the Later Middle Ages: A Province or a Foreign Kingdom for the English?,’ in *Contact and Exchange in Later Medieval Europe*, eds Hannah Skoda, Patrick Lantschner and R.L.J Shaw (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 127.
- 70 Ralph Griffiths, *The Reign of Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461* (London: Ernest Benn, 1981), 155.
- 71 Brown, *James I*, 26, notes that ‘James’s poem *The Kingis Quair* bears testimony to his personal delight in the match.’
- 72 Fiona Downie, *She is but a Woman: Queenship in Scotland, 1424–1463* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), 32.
- 73 George Burnett, ed., *The Exchequer Rolls of the Kingdom of Scotland vol. IV (1406–1436)* (Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1880), 466, 477 [hereafter *ER*], show payments for king’s expenses at a Day of Truce and meeting with Beaufort.
- 74 *PPC*, iv, 178.
- 75 The Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707, K.M. Brown et al. eds. (St Andrews, 2007–2014), 1428/7/3, <http://www.rps.ac.uk/>, accessed: 22 January 2014.
- 76 Bower, viii, 297–9.
- 77 Stevenson, *Letters*, ii, 444.
- 78 Bain, IV, no. 951.
- 79 Bower, viii, 241; Brown, *James I*, 122–3, 139–40.
- 80 A.A.M Duncan, *James I: King of Scots, 1424–1437*, 2nd ed. (University of Glasgow: Department of Scottish History, 1984), 14.
- 81 *ER*, iv, 681.
- 82 *Ibid*, 679–82.
- 83 G.L. Harriss, *Cardinal Beaufort: A Study of Lancastrian Ascendancy and Decline* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 180–1.
- 84 Bower, viii, 221.
- 85 Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 137–41.

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# 11 Commanding the Crown

## Royal Hostages in the Wars of the Roses, 1455–83

*Alex Brondarbit*

Faced with the unfolding denouement of his own tragic downfall, Shakespeare's Richard II posed a series of questions at the notion of surrendering his crown and royal dignity.<sup>1</sup> 'What must the king do now? Must he submit? The king shall do it: must he be deposed?'<sup>2</sup> The concerns Richard expressed on the late sixteenth-century English stage echoed serious political anxieties that arose not only in 1399, but in a relative explosion of incidents in the late fifteenth century involving hostage kings. Amid a backdrop of the civil discord that acutely affected English politics between 1455 and 1487, three different kings were constrained by their own subjects on five separate occasions. This significant intensification of royal hostage activity interrupted the reign of Henry VI who was held by the Yorkists in 1455, 1460, and finally from 1465 to 1470. Additionally, Edward IV and his eldest son, the uncrowned Edward V, were held hostage in 1469 and 1483, respectively, by the most powerful figures within the Yorkists' own ranks.

Unlike cases involving foreign princes as hostages, monarchs held in periods of domestic conflict were not negotiated for nor were they released for ransom or other types of concessions binding the royal prerogative in any meaningful manner. Yet they were more than mere captives. Imprisonment alone is not a sufficient measure to label a detainee—royal or otherwise—a hostage. The royal hostage was held for a *function*, one which revolved heavily around control over the king's two bodies, that is his mortal body as well as the undying body politic from which his authority was derived. When both were constrained, the captor could proceed to impose acquiescence to his usurped authority.<sup>3</sup> This was done with the aim of eventually separating the king's two bodies by usurping the king's body politic and reassigning it to the captor, which in turn allowed for the former king's mortal body to be done away with altogether. It has been asserted by Adam Kosto that this sort of hostage taking first arose in the eighteenth century and was limited to times of war.<sup>4</sup> Such a definition does not agree with the manner in which kings were held in England during the late Middle Ages. Therefore, this chapter will examine the use of English royal hostages during the Wars of the Roses as a means of control as well as the methods by which captors attempted to circumvent notions of kingship and achieve permanence for their usurped authority.



Defining a set methodology within domestic royal hostage cases in the medieval period is a difficult, if not impossible, task, as the practice not only bore its own unique characteristics when compared to the hostage norms of ancient Greece, ancient Rome or the modern period, but remained highly mutable in its own right. Medieval hostage practices displayed remarkable fluidity in both method and purpose. The contingent nature of hostage taking has been summarised by Kosto as one 'depending on the parties involved, on the nature of the business at hand, and, crucially, on the particular period in question.'<sup>5</sup> This assertion is well-founded given that each case in the late fifteenth century involved a varied spectrum of motivations, resources, methods, obstacles and outcomes. It is therefore hardly surprising that the efficacy of the hostage-taker's efforts led to mixed results. Prior to the Wars, hostages were an element within a myriad of politico-military agreements between the Norman Conquest and the Hundred Years' War. The cases in which foreign leaders or their blood relatives were held by an opposing state were rare, but patterns in the practice of holding foreign royal hostages can be observed. Negotiations for release were primarily centered upon the issue of ransom. Baldwin II of Jerusalem, Richard I of England, Charles II of Naples as well as the French kings Louis IX and Jean II were notable examples of ransom and release cases.<sup>6</sup> Even anointed queens were not immune as Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI, was taken in May 1471 by the victorious Yorkists following the battle of Tewkesbury. Margaret's four-year imprisonment ended with her ransom of 50,000 crowns, paid by Louis XI following Edward IV's 1475 expedition.<sup>7</sup> Money was a major aspect of each case, but treaties of friendship and marriage alliances were also common terms that accompanied payment.<sup>8</sup> An additional characteristic was the manner in which a hostage king begat further hostages. The agreement that secured his release required men of high rank to be handed over as a guarantee that the diplomatic resolutions would be carried out as specified. Between former enemies, the need for guarantees was crucial and every stage required some form of surety.

The cases that occurred throughout the Wars of the Roses operated beyond the expected practices of medieval royal hostage norms employed as recently as the Hundred Years' War when foreign princes such as Jean II and David II were captured by the English. Instead they continued the tradition of holding the captive king indefinitely until a lasting resolution could be achieved in which the captor's authority was formally recognised and accepted. As such, it is hardly surprising that the capture of Henry VI in 1465 led to a five-year imprisonment which did not feature any attempts to secure his release through negotiation. He was a prisoner of political rather than monetary value which rested on Henry's continued constraint. Edward IV's decision to allow his great rival and rebel to live rather than being put to a convenient demise in a similar fashion as Edward II and Richard II has been viewed by Christine Carpenter as a political blunder which factored into the Yorkist king's temporary deposition in 1470.<sup>9</sup> This suggestion fails to account for the need to control the actions of those outside the reach of



the government. The consequences of dispatching Henry VI while his male heir still roamed free across the Channel surrendered a valuable advantage. Michael Hicks has argued that 'To kill him was merely to exchange a rival in one's power for one outside it—his son Prince Edward of Lancaster—and was not therefore to Edward IV's advantage.'<sup>10</sup> Henry VI was a hostage rather than a captive due to the fact that he was held with the implicit purpose of controlling the actions of the Lancastrian supporters still operating in France and the Low Countries. Holding Henry hostage prevented the exiled Lancastrians from shifting their focus to his heir and crowning Edward of Lancaster king, creating a banner for disaffected parties to rally behind. The fugitive prince, much like the exiled Henry Tudor two decades later, would have become a greater symbol of resistance beyond the government's reach. A similar situation arose in Scotland in 1482 when the captive James III was kept alive by his captors as a means of preventing the immediate succession of his son, James, duke of Rothesay.<sup>11</sup> When the need to bar Lancaster's crowning expired with his death at Tewkesbury, Edward IV naturally leapt on the opportunity to dispatch his great rival in the Tower shortly thereafter as Henry's function was no longer relevant.

Although much more suited to the crown than his predecessor due to his military success, physical attributes and proactive style of rule, even Edward IV tasted captivity as the obstacles he inherited in 1461 were still present nearly a decade into his reign. The honeymoon Edward enjoyed with the common people at his accession had long since evaporated by 1469 in the face of broken promises, misappropriated taxation, continued domestic strife, grasping favourites at court and a highly unpopular foreign policy.<sup>12</sup> Such problems played into the hands of Edward's great disgruntled magnate and former prop of the throne, Richard Neville, earl of Warwick and Salisbury. Although lacking support from the rest of the nobility including his own brother, John Neville, earl of Northumberland, Warwick's influence with the common people was renowned. He was likely the driving force behind a series of popular rebellions in Kent where he held substantial sway as Warden of the Cinque Ports and Captain of Calais. Additionally, a series of uprisings in the north under the captains Robin of Redesdale and Robin of Holderness was also fuelled by the earl. The northern rebels made their complaints explicit with manifestos recycling old grievances targeting the ills of government which dated back to Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450. In the nineteen years since Cade, the people had not only seen past objections go unanswered, but the addition of several new ones into the bargain. The chronicler John Warkworth recorded public sentiment, writing 'the people looked after . . . prosperyte and peece, but it came not; but one batayle aftere another, and moche troble and grett losse of goodes amonge the comone peple.'<sup>13</sup> Following the defeat of a royalist army at Edgecote, Edward was captured unaware of the defeat and cut-off from his household power-base.<sup>14</sup> He was promptly delivered to Warwick by his former chancellor, George Neville, Archbishop of York.

Described as an 'astute man as ever was Ulysses,' Warwick ran the country 'at the king's side' while Edward was 'not at liberty to go where he wished.'<sup>15</sup> Despite the earl's early success, the task remained to ensure that the rest of the political elite accepted his position. Warwick took the opportunity to permanently remove many of his political rivals in the Yorkist regime. Richard Wydeville, Earl Rivers; Humphrey Stafford, Earl of Devon; and William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke were all condemned. Yet he could not execute every power-broker capable of challenging him lest he inflame the barons into open opposition. Coercion was required for what the axe could no longer do. With the king held at Middleham Castle, Warwick's hostage achieved him the grudging acquiescence from a baronage that had abstained from his coup and possessed the means to forcibly undo his gains if mobilised. Even staunch supporters of Edward such as Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers of Chartley; Henry Bouchier, Earl of Essex; William, Lord Hastings; and other members of the king's council continued to serve despite the constraint of his person and the suspicions they must have surely harboured. Rather than respond in any measurable manner to free their king from the earl's control, the magnates were content to allow Warwick to murder his rivals as long as he did not overstep himself and threaten the king's right to the throne.<sup>16</sup> The lack of active response is a striking occurrence given inaction of long-standing Yorkists Bouchier, Ferrers and Hastings who were all recipients of generous levels of patronage since the foundation years of his reign. Moreover, Bouchier was Edward's uncle through his marriage to Isabel of Cambridge and all three men had served Edward's father.<sup>17</sup> The lack of a coherent response in 1469 from all three men who showed conspicuous loyalty to Edward throughout his reign demonstrates the effectiveness of Warwick's royal hostage to curb their political action.

The estrangement between Edward and Warwick and the subsequent brief captivity of the king bears a strong resemblance to the tug-of-war between Richard, Duke of York and the government of Henry VI over the direction of the kingdom throughout the 1450s. Much like York's brief second protectorate in 1455, Warwick held the king in silken chains and faced the task of taming an unsympathetic noble majority suspicious of his motives. Rule over the king lent credibility to the authority of the detainer and, for a time, was sufficient to keep the ruling elite and the commons relatively tranquil as both cases demonstrate royal authority could be exercised by a deputy. However, it was a position which lacked strong footing and the earl's governance evaporated just as quickly as York's due to a lack of royal authority behind commands which could only originate from the king. These gaps led to the collapse of the position of both quasi-rulers. Whereas the duke met his failure in parliament on the issue of resumption, the herald of Warwick's end came under the scope of law and order in the form of an ill-timed Lancastrian uprising led by Sir Humphrey Neville of Brancepeth in upper Tynedale.<sup>18</sup> The revolt was hardly a mass movement, yet it successfully tested the boundaries of Warwick's authority as there were

clearly limits to how far forced obedience could run. The magnates could be made to accept Warwick's execution of royal favourites and his hold over the king, but they could not be swayed to levy troops against their will nor could they be prevented from pursuing their private ambitions and personal feuds. Norfolk's siege of the Pastons' castle of Caister and the private battle of Nibley Green which emerged from a dispute between Lord Berkeley and Viscount Lisle, which left the latter dead, attest to the growing sense of security the magnates felt in disturbing the king's peace to pursue private quarrels.<sup>19</sup> Attempts to convince Norfolk to suspend his siege were met with the haughty remark that he would not desist in his pursuit for any duke in England. The breakdown in law and order provided the loophole by which the king earned his freedom. Upon his entry into London, Edward IV's impressive entourage—including the dukes of Gloucester and Suffolk, the earls of Essex, Northumberland and Arundel, and Lords Hastings and Mountjoy—was meant to demonstrate the support the king possessed amongst the political elite who, despite their high station and influence, had been so recently rendered impotent by Edward's imprisonment.<sup>20</sup>

The last occurrence of royal hostageship during the Wars of the Roses is the most infamous. The uncrowned Edward V accompanied by his younger brother, Richard, duke of York, were held at the command of their uncle, Richard, duke of Gloucester, in 1483 until their much-debated disappearance. It remains unclear precisely when the duke decided to take the throne. Much like Henry IV at the turn of the century, Gloucester may have set his sights higher than originally intended once the king and government were under his thumb. The princes present a more nuanced case of royal hostageship, involving the successful employment of previous tactics whilst simultaneously avoiding past pitfalls. Again, the purpose of holding the king's person was to not only usurp his authority to govern the country, but to consolidate the captor's position by removing potential sources capable of a counter-coup. By securing the king's person at Stony Stratford on the road to London, Gloucester robbed the Wydevilles of the power to govern and left the unpopular affinity isolated. Control of the king's person won the duke the ability to control both policy and patronage. The dominance he achieved over the king is alluded to in the opening language in a number of surviving signet letters remaining from Edward's brief rule, 'with the assent of our dearest and most faithful uncle, Richard, duke of Gloucester, protector and defender of our realm of England during our minority.'<sup>21</sup>

Such influence was not wasted as Gloucester picked off opponents—both real and imagined—soon after securing the formal recognition of his position as Lord Protector at a council meeting on 10 May. On 13 June the ever-loyal Yorkist, William, Lord Hastings, had his long career of service end in dramatic fashion as he was surprised with a sudden charge of treason at a council meeting and summarily executed at the Tower without trial.<sup>22</sup> Further obstacles in Thomas Rotherham, Archbishop of York and John Morton, Bishop of Ely were also removed by imprisonment. Hastings' death not

only left his substantial following leaderless and ready to be incorporated into the Duke of Buckingham's swelling affinity, but also 'removed the natural leader of the still influential body of Edward IV's household men, the core of the county establishment of the southern shires, who, as their later rebellion shows, could well have been mobilised in support of Edward V's continued occupation of the throne.'<sup>23</sup> As for the members of the Wydeville affinity, those who had not already been imprisoned and executed after the duke's first coup at Stony Stratford were left politically isolated and scattered when support did not prove forthcoming. Initially, Sir Edward Wydeville's command of the fleet appeared problematic; however, threats of treason led to mass desertions, forcing the outlaw captain to flee with two ships to Brittany. Thus, dangerous sources of potential opposition were largely held in place by the authority the Lord Protector wielded in the name of his hostage due to the latter's minority. Only when his intentions became explicit did rebellions, led by local leaders of the Yorkist establishment, finally surface in the young Edward's name throughout the southern counties in the following autumn.<sup>24</sup> Gloucester's gamble failed as his abrasive attempts to establish his authority as legitimate in its own right were largely rejected by both the southern gentry and magnates. Much like his father in 1455, Richard's role as protector and the authority it offered as the king's deputy were acceptable provided he did not overstep the boundary by usurping the king's throne. The political clout gained by possession over the king's person only ran so far as the king was not threatened by it.

How did theories of medieval kingship influence the practices employed by the king's captors? As one scholar wrote, 'The king ruled by the grace of God, his person and authority were inviolable, and he received the obedience of his subjects by divine command.'<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the king was considered sacred, protected by the statute of treason which had codified the terms of treason in 1352 with further extension to its definitions in 1398.<sup>26</sup> Taking control of his body could easily be construed as treason and those who committed such a crime faced the most gruesome of executions and the forfeiture of all possessions not only for themselves, but for their spouses and heirs. If a king's command was divinely sanctioned and protected by law, how could it be successfully subverted by his own subjects? The answer boils down to matters of patronage, propaganda and parliament. The capture of the king was merely the initial act in what would be a series of strokes designed to cement the power of the hostage-taker. The hostage-taker needed to establish a permanent basis for his authority that would be accepted. In order to realise this aim, these three facets were necessary for the captor to acquire mastery of the realm, legitimize his actions and eventually discredit the king with the aim of replacing him.

Patronage was one of the foremost weapons for acquiring and retaining loyalty of the ruling elite. Service, both past and future, had to be rewarded and control of the king provided control over the direction of his bounty. Ineffective use of patronage marred York's second protectorate

in the summer of 1455 as he dispensed little beyond his Neville and Bourchier allies for fear of jeopardizing his reform agenda.<sup>27</sup> Fourteen years later Warwick wasted what little he possessed on himself and on a vain attempt to shake the loyalty of his brother-in-law, Lord Hastings.<sup>28</sup> Warwick's use of the royal bounty for self-aggrandisement forfeited support. In Scotland, the duke of Albany and his Stewart allies committed the same error in 1482 which swung support in the direction of the captive James III.<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Edward IV utilised the royal bounty to secure sufficient backing to accept his usurpation. After his conquest, Edward possessed vast estates in his hands as a result of numerous forfeitures generated by those who had chosen the 'wrong' side of the civil war. He promptly spent the next three years (over) generously doling out the fruits of victory amongst his supporters. Elevations became abundant early into the reign as several of York's old supporters as well as more recent converts to Edward's cause were rewarded with grants of lands, and in a number of instances promotion to or within the peerage. Eight new barons were created (lords Cromwell, Hastings, Herbert, Lumley, Montagu, Ogle, Stafford of Southwick and Wenlock), while three barons (lords Ferrers of Chartley, Morley and Scales) were recognised in their wives' right.<sup>30</sup> In 1483 spectacular grants were made to Richard's chief confederate, Henry Stafford, duke of Buckingham both before and after the usurpation.<sup>31</sup> They were granted by Richard not as king, but as Lord Protector. The duke was made the virtual ruler of Wales, becoming chief justice and chamberlain of north and south Wales for life as well as constable and steward of all the castles and lordships in Wales and the Marches with the authority to supervise and govern all the subjects therein.<sup>32</sup> For his loyalty, Lord Howard was provided with considerable rewards, receiving his share of the Mowbray and Scales inheritances, the prized duchy of Norfolk, and the great offices of earl marshal and admiral of England.<sup>33</sup> Further provisions were made for Howard's son, Thomas, who was given the Mowbray title to the earldom of Surrey as well as a generous annuity of £1,100 for the remainder of his father's life.<sup>34</sup> Yet patronage only went so far. His limited bounty aside, Richard's decision to set aside his own nephew was rejected by the Yorkist establishment which possessed considerable loyalty to the late king and his heir as demonstrated by the strong rejection of Richard in the south at the outset of Buckingham's Rebellion.

The captor naturally went to great effort to legitimize his action to escape the potentially ruinous label of treason. This was done with propaganda which served to manage public perception and assuage any violent response. 'The history of England in the fifteenth century,' wrote Charles Ross, 'is marked by a vastly increased use of propaganda.'<sup>35</sup> Written manifestos, rhymes, broadsheets, sermons, genealogies, prophecies and satirical ballads were disseminated to discredit a regime<sup>36</sup> and often set the groundwork for open resistance, yet it was visual propaganda which possessed stronger correlation with royal hostages as it was utilised at the moment and subsequent aftermath of the initial seizure of the king. Except for 1465, each

case featured the hostage-taker attempting to control the public transcript with protestations of loyalty to the hostage, offering the hostage-taker the opportunity to publically display their actions in a positive light. As such, it was a useful tactic for managing public perception and curbing potential threats. The public protestation of fealty was a means of rewriting treasonous activity into a more palatable government reform movement. After their victory at the first battle of St Albans, York and Warwick:

Cam unto the king our souveraigne lorde there as he was, and besought hym on theire knees of grace and forgevenesse of that they had done in his presence and besought hym of his highenesse to take hem as for his trewe liegemen seying that they never entended hurte unto his persone.<sup>37</sup>

In 1469, at Edward IV's capture 'The Earl of Warwick greeted the king courteously without doing him any bodily harm, but to keep his person safe Edward was sent to Warwick Castle.'<sup>38</sup> These scenes bear remarkable similarity to the humble manner in which Edward, the Black Prince, served his prisoner, Jean II, following his victory at Poitiers in 1356.<sup>39</sup> The humility displayed contrasts with the private transcript and the unspoken reality of the king's lack of power. All forms of respect were again paid to Henry who was taken after the battle of Northampton. The chronicle sources record the captors' efforts to stress the king's dominance: 'And than the Erle of Marche, and the Erle of Warwyke, with oþer lordis, brought the kynge to Northampton with myche rialte.'<sup>40</sup> Despite the subservient performance by the king's captors in public, the true powerlessness of their hostage is evident in the language used by contemporaries describing the events 'They say he [York] has demanded pardon from the king for himself and his men, and will have it . . . The Duke of York has the government, and the people are very pleased at this.'<sup>41</sup> When the king re-acquired power, these actions were again re-written. York and his allies were condemned as traitors in the Coventry parliament of 1459 and their actions four years prior played a large role in their denouncement:

Where you, sovereign lord, were present with your banner displayed, and there they falsely and traitorously waged war against you, whereby your royal person was badly hurt and your life in great danger: and they also slew various lords of your blood.<sup>42</sup>

Eighteen years later, Richard, duke of Gloucester publically swore his allegiance to Edward V at York, Stony Stratford and London. Such visible demonstrations were likely meant as a tool for disarming any potential reaction to his seizure of the king. Furthermore, the lack of any visible signs of constraint as the young king rode into London with his uncle only served to empower the message behind the display. The lack of public denigration demonstrates the unwillingness of a king's captors to damage permanently

the sanctity of the office. Instead all respects were rigorously maintained. The chains remained implicit and all faults in rule were cast upon evil and traitorous councillors rather than directly upon the king.

Vilification of a king only occurred when the captor achieved permanence for his authority and needed to divorce the mortal king from the body politic. The treatment of Henry VI in 1465 was an example of the veil dropping as his captors were no longer required to maintain such appearances. Henry was 'caryed to Londone on horse bake, and his lege bownde to the styrope, and so brought thurgh Londone to the Toure, where he was kepte longe tyme by two squyres and ij yomen of the crowne, and ther menne.'<sup>43</sup> Such treatment at this stage was consistent with Yorkist rhetoric which sponsored language designed to highlight the Lancastrian kings as usurpers. Henry was consistently referred to as 'late in dede and not in right kyng of England' in the records of central government after his overthrow. During Edward IV's first parliament in November 1461, Henry was said to have 'usurped and intruded upon the Roiall Power . . . taking upon hym usurpously the Croune and name of Kyng.'<sup>44</sup> This language and the public denigration were required to stress the illegitimacy of Henry's reign, and consequently render invalid any loyalty that may have still lingered in the minds of his former subjects. Further attesting to the power of such visual propaganda was the gross miscalculation of George Neville whose decision to parade Henry before the city of London in 1471 backfired entirely. The archbishop hoped to rally the king's subjects, but instead publically demonstrated Henry's unsuitability for the royal estate. Henry's lack of regal bearing alienated the citizens further and sapped any will to resist Edward IV's return.<sup>45</sup> The *Great Chronicle* records that the king was dressed in 'a long blue gown of velvet as though he had no more to change with' and that the king had to be held 'by the hand all that way' by the archbishop. The shabbiness of his clothing was 'more like a play than the showing of a prince to win men's hearts.'<sup>46</sup>

Lastly, all usurpers of the king's authority required the assent of the political community to recognise the legitimacy of their actions to seize the king. Through this recognition, loyalty could be fostered and a favourable long-term resolution which recognised their authority could be achieved. This was most easily acquired in Parliament which acted like a channel with the realm.<sup>47</sup> York's second protectorate failed when the duke proved incapable of commanding a working majority amongst the baronage on his reform measures despite successfully placing the blame for first battle of St Albans on his deceased rivals.<sup>48</sup> His attempt to secure recognition for the legitimacy of his actions were later condemned in the parliament of 1459 which re-assigned the blame on the Yorkists for the events at St Albans four years prior, denouncing 'how they worked to bring about the appalling Act of Parliament concerning the execrable and most detestable deed done by them at St Albans.'<sup>49</sup> York fared little better when he raised the stakes and submitted his claim to the assembly on 16 October 1460. Warwick's efforts to garner allies for York's decision notwithstanding, support in London had



not been forthcoming as evident by the refusal of Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury to cooperate in the scheme. After much debate, York's rights were recognised, but not put into immediate effect. The task of discrediting Henry VI went beyond York and Warwick's capabilities. Despite Henry's assent to York's machinations, the *Accord* did little to further the latter's interests as it was rejected by the queen and her allies.

The duke's youngest son would have more success in 1483. After possibly testing a number of recycled arguments through his mouthpiece Dr. Ralph Shaa, Gloucester managed to discredit his hostage long enough to achieve the recognition of his title despite the lukewarm reception to his flimsy arguments. The final version of his claim launched into a multi-pronged attack upon the failings of his late brother's government due to evil counsel as well as the legitimacy of the Wydeville marriage and thus any fruits from it.<sup>50</sup> Yet it was fear of Gloucester and Buckingham's armies—according to Dominic Mancini—which overawed the capital and lent force to the persuasiveness of the duke's contentions.<sup>51</sup> The certain awareness of the leverage Gloucester and Buckingham possessed over the city is noted by Hicks: 'Richard ensured that his military superiority was realised by summoning the mayor, alderman and liverymen to his inspection of the army at Moorfields on 3 July.'<sup>52</sup> As discussed, Richard's control of the king had already provided him ample opportunity to remove any potential sources of opposition. Publically discredited and lacking any immediate unified support, Edward V and his brother were rendered expendable liabilities no longer protected by the sanctity of their station.

Analysis of intensification of royal hostage cases throughout the Wars of the Roses reveals the need for usurpers to use their hold over the king to control the action of their opponents. Control remained an embedded purpose behind the king's captivity. Possession of his person proved useful in managing the ongoing political considerations the fighting did not and could not adequately address. The ability to remove rivals, promote allies, influence government policy and rewrite the public transcript to suit their purposes were all achieved through the usurped authority their hostage provided. Such actions were at least temporarily accepted by the ruling elite as the king could serve as a mouthpiece to empower the captor's authority. However, a clash of interests proved inevitable as the hostage-taker always attempted to cement the permanence of his position lest he find himself open to retaliation by the aggrieved parties or the king himself as the Lords Appellant had experienced in the late fourteenth century. Such a move would naturally require usurpation and death. Not even a pawn king could authorise his own removal as evident by the rejection of York ambitions by large swathes of the realm in 1460. Achieving permanent acceptance thus required effective use of patronage, propaganda and parliament to win support and discredit the king. Only when the king's two bodies were divorced and his function as a hostage ceased was death permissible. Captive kings without purpose were always killed. The courtier's decision

to remove Henry IV's 'living fear' in Shakespeare's play demonstrates a keen awareness to the fragile station of a usurper, the threat a discredited monarch still possessed and the necessity of his permanent removal once his usefulness as a hostage expired.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank Professor Michael Hicks, Dr James Ross, Dr Katherine Weikert, Dr Matthew Bennett and Dr Gordon McKelvie for kindly reading through and commenting on earlier drafts of this paper.
- 2 William Shakespeare, *Richard II* (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 2013), Act III, scene III (CW, 499).
- 3 E.H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 24–31. Removing a king forcibly without reassigning the body politic to his successor in an effective and public manner allowed opponents of the regime to fan unrest. The reburial of Richard II at Westminster Abbey in 1412 was an attempt by Henry V to symbolically restore the royal status of the former king so that Richard could die a second death, allowing his body politic to be reassigned to Henry as the incumbent. This was a means of ensuring the stability of the Lancastrian dynasty by quelling the persistent rumors of Richard's survival which had persisted stubbornly throughout Henry IV's reign: see P. Strohm, 'The Trouble with Richard: The Reburial of Richard II and Lancastrian Symbolic Strategy,' *Speculum* 71 (1996): 87–111.
- 4 Kosto, 4.
- 5 Kosto, 1.
- 6 R.L. Nicholson, 'The Growth of the Latin States, 1118–1144,' in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. K.M. Setton, 6 vols. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969–89), II, 368–409; H.G. Bohm, ed., *Chronicles of the Crusades: Contemporary Narratives* (London: Routledge, 2004), 339, 435–7, 444–5; John Gillingham, *Richard I* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 222–53; W.C. Jordan, *Louis IX and the Challenge of the Crusade: A Study in Rulership* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).
- 7 *Foed.* V, p. iii, 68, 79.
- 8 *Foed.* III, p. ii, 3, 75, 77.
- 9 Christine Carpenter, *The Wars of the Roses: Politics and the Constitution in England, c. 1437–1509* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 163, 181.
- 10 Michael Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 180.
- 11 N. Macdougall, *James III* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), 207.
- 12 M.L. Kekewich et al., eds., *The Politics of Fifteenth-Century England: John Vale's Book* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1995), 43–53, 212–3, 220–2; Charles D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London: Yale University Press, 1974), 126–60; Michael Hicks, *False, Fleeting, Perjur'd Clarence: George, Duke of Clarence, 1449–78* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980), 46–51; Hicks, *Wars*, 169–201; K.R. Dockray, 'The Yorkshire Rebellions of 1469,' *The Ricardian* 83 (1983): 252.
- 13 *Dethe*, 105–6. This sentiment is echoed in the Great Chronicle, see *The Great Chronicle of London*, eds. A.H. Thomas and I.D. Thornley (1938), 208.
- 14 N. Pronay and J. Cox, eds., *The Crowland Chronicle Continuations 1459–1486* (London: Alan Sutton, 1986), 116–7. A contemporary account of Edward's capture is related in *EHD* IV, 302.

- 15 A.B. Hinds, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts existing in the Archives and Collections of Milan, 1385–1618* (London, 1913), I, 132 [hereafter *CSP Milan*].
- 16 Ross, *Edward IV*, 133; CCR 1468–76, 85–7; Michael Hicks, *Warwick the King-maker* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 277.
- 17 British Library Egerton Roll 8783; TNA SC6/1115/7, /850/28, /1113/10; CPR, 1452–61, p. 536; L.S. Woodger, 'Henry Bourghier, Earl of Essex and His Family (1408–83)' (Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1974), 63–4, 64n; J.T. Rosenthal, 'Fifteenth Century Baronial Incomes and Richard of York,' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 37 (1964): 233–9, and 'The Estates and Finances of Richard, duke of York (1411–60),' *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 2 (1965): 115–204; P.A. Johnson, *Duke Richard of York, 1411–1460* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), Appendix III.
- 18 For the collapse of York's second protectorate, see Johnson, *Richard*, 172–3; *Paston*, III, 74.
- 19 Michael Hicks, *Richard III and his Rivals: Magnates and their Motives in the Wars of the Roses* (London: Hambledon, 1991), 50–1.
- 20 *Paston*, V, 62–3.
- 21 R. Horrox and P.W. Hammond, eds., *British Library Harleian Manuscript 433*, 3 vols (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1979), I, 26–7, 36, 43, 48, 51, 55, 61.
- 22 *Crowland*, 159.
- 23 Charles Ross, *Richard III* (London: Yale University, 1999), 86.
- 24 For a fuller account of the uprising, see L. Gill, *Richard III and Buckingham's Rebellion* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1999), 1–19, 70–94.
- 25 G.L. Harriss, 'The King and his Subjects,' in *Fifteenth Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England*, ed. Rosemary Horrox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 13. See also Michael Hicks, *English Political Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2002), 28–50; S.B. Chrimes, *English Constitutional Ideas in the Fifteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 6; A.J. Gross, *Dissolution of the Lancastrian Kingship* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1996), 37.
- 26 Anne Curry and Rosemary Horrox, eds., *The Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, 1275–1504*, 16 vols (London: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), V, 44–5 (hereafter *Parliament Rolls*); *EHD*, IV, 406.
- 27 Johnson, *Richard*, 159–60; TNA, E 404/70/3/73; C76/132.
- 28 CPR 1467–77, 165; R. Somerville, *History of the Duchy of Lancaster* (1953), I, 422.
- 29 Macdougall, *James III*, 213.
- 30 H. Kleineke, *Edward IV* (London: Routledge, 2009), 61.
- 31 CPR, 1476–85, 349; Nichols, J.G., ed., *Grants from the Crown during the Reign of Edward V*, (1854), 5–7, 8–11; C. Rawcliffe, *The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham, 1394–1521* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 31.
- 32 Kleineke, *Edward IV*, 29–33.
- 33 A. Crawford, *Yorkist Lord: John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, c. 1425–1485* (London: Continuum, 2010), 104, 110–11; A. Crawford, ed., *Howard Household Books* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992), 391–472. For further grants, see CPR, 1476–85, 359, 363, 365, 411, 497, 501, 541; *Harleian MSS 433*, I, pp. 72, 74–5, 80–1, 206, 213.
- 34 CChR, 1427–1516, 258; CPR, 1476–85, 479; S. Bentley, ed., *Excerpta Historica* (1831), 382.
- 35 Charles D. Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion during the Wars of the Roses,' in *Patronage, Crown & Provinces*, ed. R.A. Griffiths (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1981), 15.

- 36 Ross, 'Rumour,' 15; Hicks, 'Idealism,' 54. See also T. Wright, ed., *Vale's Book*, 195–202, 208–15, 218–22; *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History . . .*, 2 vols (London: Longmans, 1859–61), 221–5, 258–71; C.L. Kingsford, ed., *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1913), 228–52.
- 37 *John Vale's Book*, 193. See also EHD, IV, 275–7.
- 38 EHD, IV, 302.
- 39 G.C. Macaulay, ed., and J. Bouchier, trans., *The Chronicles of Froissart* (London, 1908), 131.
- 40 J. Gairdner, ed., *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*, Camden Society new ser., 28 (1880), 73.
- 41 CSP Milan, I, 16–7.
- 42 *Parliament Rolls*, XII, 456–7.
- 43 *Dethe*, 96–7.
- 44 P. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation, 1399–1422* (London: Yale University Press, 1998), 99; *Parliament Rolls*, XIII, 14–21.
- 45 *Great Chronicle*, 215; Ross, *Edward IV*, 166; B.P. Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London: Yale University Press, 1981) 345–6.
- 46 *Great Chronicle*, 215.
- 47 The role Parliament played in a usurping king's need to cement their position has been expounded by Paul Cavi, *The English Parliaments of Henry VII 1485–1504* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 22–45.
- 48 *Parliament Rolls*, XII, 348–45.
- 49 *Parliament Rolls*, XII, 457.
- 50 *Parliament Rolls*, XV, 15–16.
- 51 Dominic Mancini, *The Usurpation of Richard III*, ed. and trans. C.A.J. Armstrong (Oxford: Alan Sutton, 1969), 92–3.
- 52 Michael Hicks, *Richard III* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), 142.

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## 12 Hostages and the Laws of War

### The Surrender of the Castle and Palace of Rouen (1449–68)

*Rémy Ambühl*

There was no permanent international court per se in the late Middle Ages, but there were different opportunities for any injured party to seek legal redress from court against an enemy, under the law of arms.<sup>1</sup> Such legal actions, however, were much more likely to be initiated ‘after the war’ rather than during it, and therefore concerned matters which kept on their relevance outside the heat of the action, such as, for instance, the ownership of a prisoner or the payment of a ransom.<sup>2</sup> Treaties of surrender of fortresses or urban communities, on the other hand, which belonged to the heat of the action, had to rely on different forms of enforcement.

There is good reason to believe that negotiated surrender for these places during the Hundred Years’ War was the norm.<sup>3</sup> They took the shape of contractual agreements, which, like any other free-willed contracts had force of law and would be recognised by any court of justice. The expediency of military campaigns, however, left no room for a legal action before a court. Any engagement taken by the surrendering party had to be guaranteed by different means. The word of honour exchanged by the besiegers and the besieged to abide by the terms of a treaty was usually backed up by the delivery of hostages by the surrendering party. The ‘legal institution’ of hostageship in this particular context has been recently surveyed by Adam Kosto in his remarkable study of hostages in the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> Temperance and observance of the rules emerge from this survey. But what happened to hostages when the obligation for which they acted as guarantor was not performed? This present contribution focuses on the margins, a situation of crisis, that of the collapse of the treaty of surrender of the castle and palace of Rouen, in 1449.

This important case-study, not least, for its alleged impact on the Wars of the Roses, has remained largely unstudied.<sup>5</sup> The wealth of documentation generated by this high-profile case, however, provides a deep and original insight into the rules and principles which governed hostageship and surrender, addressing a vast array of questions. How were hostages chosen or negotiated? What value did they have in the eyes of the besiegers? Why would a treaty collapse? What impact did this collapse have on the fate of the hostages? Was their life at risk, and why? How would they regain their



freedom? The first part of this chapter focuses on the choice of hostages, as revealed in the terms and guarantees of the treaty, while the second part reconstructs and compares the fate of the individual hostages, after the failure of the treaty, from scattered but, nonetheless, detailed information.

Political considerations have been mostly left aside from this chapter, both for the sake of clarity and because they do not significantly add to its central argument around rules and principles. A very brief contextualisation of the siege and surrender of Rouen, therefore, should be sufficient.<sup>6</sup> A truce between Charles VII and Henry VI had been sealed at Tours, in 1444, and renewed until 1448.<sup>7</sup> It broke down at the conferences of Les Roches-Tranchelion (near Chinon), on 31 July 1449, which marked the end of the diplomatic negotiations between Charles and Henry's representative in France, Edmund, duke of Somerset.<sup>8</sup> From then proceeded the systematic reconquest of Normandy, which lasted just over a year, ending in August 1450. Charles VII had gathered a strong army, but he also heavily relied on the support of the Normans to overthrow English rule in Normandy. The fall of Rouen, in first days of November 1449, a major blow to the Lancastrian government in France, is a good example of this. A rebellion of the townspeople, stirred up by the French government, pushed the English garrison back to the castle and palace of Rouen, on 19 October. It was then a matter of time for the French army, invited in by the Rouennais, to subdue the two remaining fortresses. A treaty of surrender between French and English negotiators on behalf of, respectively, Charles VII and the duke of Somerset, was sealed on 29 October.<sup>9</sup> The evacuation of the English was to take place a few days later on 2 November.

Treaties of surrender were contractual agreements. In general, those who accepted the new governance were bound to give an oath of fealty to the new ruler and could remain in possession of all their properties, while those who wished to depart could do so safely with or without their moveables.<sup>10</sup> Hostages had become instrumental to the widespread practice coined by Matthew Strickland as 'conditional respites': 'By this, a hard-pressed garrison might apply to a besieging commander for a respite of a set number of days in which to seek aid from their lord, on the understanding that if such aid was not forthcoming within the stipulated period, they would surrender their castle without further resistance.'<sup>11</sup> The practice dates back to at least the twelfth century. It acted as a brake on violence, allowing a garrison which was not relieved on time to surrender with their honour intact: any military obligation toward their lord was discharged. Hostages were handed over by the besieged as guarantee that they would not change their mind, had they not been relieved by the end of the respite. By the fifteenth century conditional respites were part of the customs of war and hostages had become a routine part of negotiated surrenders, which usually ran smoothly.<sup>12</sup> The surrender of the castle and palace of Rouen, from this perspective, was an exception.

Clauses 1 and 2 of the treaty of surrender anticipated that anyone in the castle and palace of Rouen who wished to leave and return to England would

be provided with safe-conducts, on the following day, Thursday 30 October.<sup>13</sup> The 'big tower' of the castle had to be handed over on that very day. The remainder of the castle and the palace of Rouen were to be evacuated within four days. Eight named hostages guaranteed the forthcoming evacuation of the palace—i.e., (in order of appearance in the treaty) 'monseigneur de Cheselbery' or John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, 'maistre Bergueney' or George Neville, son of Edward Neville, Lord Bergavenny, 'maistre Rooz' or Richard Roos, esquire, second son of Thomas 8th Lord Roos, 'maistre Ormond' or John Ormond, second son of James Butler, earl of Ormond, 'maistre Richard Franguenhall' or Sir Richard Froghale, 'messire Henry Rethford' or Sir Henry Redford, 'maistre Dacres' or Thomas Dacre, son of Thomas Lord Dacre, and 'Richard Gowier' or Richard Gower.<sup>14</sup> The four-day long respite that was left to the English garrison was purely practical. They had no hope, of course, of being relieved between 29 October and 2 November. Four days was the time allocated to them to pack up. The real purpose of the hostages lay elsewhere.

Two additional undertakings had been agreed by the English. Clause 2 of the treaty anticipated that the towns and castles of Caudebec, Tancarville, Honfleur, Arques and Montivilliers were to be evacuated by 15 November.<sup>15</sup> The eight hostages stood as surety for their delivery. A financial agreement came on top of this, in the shape of a collective ransom. As phrased in Clause 3, Somerset was bound to pay for himself, for Talbot, and for their company, a sum of 50,000 *saluts d'or* within a year.<sup>16</sup> The payment was to be delivered in three instalments. Only four of the eight hostages guaranteed this payment: that is, Neville, Roos, Ormond and Gower. One hostage at a time would be released on payment of each instalment. The combination of these terms was both unusual and onerous. This agreement reveals the weak position in which the English found themselves after the rebellion of the citizens of Rouen, and conversely, the determination of Charles VII to exploit the situation.<sup>17</sup> Two important men were in the palms of his hands. Edmund, duke of Somerset, was 'lieutenant and general governor for the king my sovereign lord in France and Normandy,' as he styled himself in his ratification of the treaty.<sup>18</sup> The English knight, John Talbot, according to chroniclers, was regarded 'the most prudent and valiant knight-in-arms of the whole party of the king of England,'<sup>19</sup> and celebrated at the time of his death, in 1453, as 'one of the most formidable scourges and one of the most sworn enemies of France.'<sup>20</sup>

Negotiations had been particularly intense. Bearing the mark of this intensity, Clause 2 of the treaty also included a sum of 6,000 *écus* to be paid by the English 'for those who had worked on the treaty.'<sup>21</sup> The five towns Charles demanded were all strategically situated on the Mouth of the Seine, apart from Arques.<sup>22</sup> In fact, Harfleur, instead of Arques had been demanded initially. This replacement was a small victory for the English. According to chroniclers, the inclusion of Talbot in the group of hostages had also been fiercely debated.<sup>23</sup> In the final draft, the English captain only

stood as surety for the evacuation of the Norman places, and not for the payment of the 50,000 *saluts d'or*. At worst, therefore, Talbot was to stay only fifteen days in the hands of the French. The payment of the ransom was to be spread over a year. Given the dire state of English finances at that time, it is probably not going too far to assume that the four hostages who acted as guarantors of the treaty would experience prolonged captivity.<sup>24</sup>

Talbot's reputation gave him a high value outside the immediate context of the agreement. The ensuing risk, according to modern theory on hostages, would be that the creditor (i.e., the French) kept the hostage instead of enforcing the agreement.<sup>25</sup> In the Middle Ages, however, surrender and hostageship operated within a legal context. Treaties were considered as any other contractual agreement. Moreover, this contract had been validated by the 'word of honour' of both the duke of Somerset and the king of France. Breaking such princely oath, without due justification, was hardly conceivable.<sup>26</sup> Cancelling the agreement and keeping the hostages on the grounds that it had not been completely fulfilled, on the other hand, would be perceived as legitimate. These precautions to preserve Talbot from a prolonged captivity eventually turned out to be of no avail, for the English captain Richard Curson refused to hand over Honfleur (one of the five towns) which had been placed under his guard. This was presented as a breach in the chain of command by Jean Chartier.<sup>27</sup> This, for sure, took Somerset by surprise. Orders to resist may have come directly from England or the announcement of forthcoming supply may have decided Curson to resist;<sup>28</sup> for, indeed, defaulting captains could face treason charges, especially if it could be proven that the place was adequately supplied, armed and garrisoned.<sup>29</sup> From a broader perspective, the blame for the failure to hand over Honfleur and the collapse of the treaty can be placed on overstressing terms of surrender, which departed too much from the norm.

What impact did Curson's decision have on the fate of the hostages? Late medieval thinkers, contrary to their early modern counterparts, did not grant much consideration to the fate of hostages in the event of a violation of promise, nor indeed to the question of hostages altogether.<sup>30</sup> Concrete examples of executions of hostages as a result of the failure of an arrangement are apparently scant. Kosto counted less than thirty cases of execution out of 1,500 hostageship cases he had collected for his study; that is barely 2%.<sup>31</sup> Three cases only related to the Hundred Years' War.<sup>32</sup> So scant is the evidence that Kosto was inclined to question the reliability of the sources which report these killings.<sup>33</sup> Insofar as Rouen is concerned, there is no reason to believe that the idea of executing the hostages had even crossed Charles VII's mind. Several reasons can be adduced to support this. Firstly, the hostages belonged to the aristocracy. Their higher status, as a rule, protected their life.<sup>34</sup> Secondly, coming often in tandem with status is the issue of wealth: the hostages represented a great financial asset to the French. Thirdly, the French could also potentially secure strategic

gains out of their neutralisation or liberation, in return for the evacuation of a place.<sup>35</sup>

Prisoners of war are precisely what the eight hostages became, and all the chroniclers made this change of status explicit, so placing the collapse of the treaty and the fate of the hostages within legal confines. According to them, it is not primarily because they were aristocrats, rich or strategically valuable that their lives were spared, but because the collapse of the treaty turned them into prisoners of war. Jean Chartier's specific use of the phrase 'prisoner of war' is worth being noted here, since it was not widespread at that time.<sup>36</sup> The chronicler arguably made a point of clearly differentiating between the two statuses: hostage and prisoner of war.<sup>37</sup> Since Chartier was the official chronicler of the French crown, this shift in the legal status of these eight Englishmen, from hostages to prisoners of war, is likely to have been the official position of the French government, which may have thought it necessary to provide a legal explanation.<sup>38</sup> Whether or not this was customary at that time is difficult to evaluate, because of the lack of points of comparison. Precedents of hostages-turned-prisoners are rare. Kosto identified two cases relating to individual ransoms—that of John II (1369) and that of Guillaume de Châteauevillain (1431)—and these were not related to surrender treaties.<sup>39</sup>

This new status of 'prisoners of war' guaranteed that the lives of the hostages would be spared, but the eight Englishmen were no longer held by any collective agreement; from that point on, they were regarded by the French as separate individuals. Their release would involve new obligations negotiated with their masters on an individual basis.<sup>40</sup> The fate of five hostages-turned-prisoners—Talbot, Neville, Ormond, Redford and Frogenhale—will now be scrutinised. The purpose of this prosopographical approach is primarily to identify principles governing the fate of these individuals and, as part of this, to appreciate the extent of the shift in responsibility from the public (crowns or representatives) to the private (prisoners and their connections) sphere.

John Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, seems to be the only one out of the eight hostages to have remained in the hands of the French king. He was without doubt the most prestigious prize, receiving all the accolades due to his rank and reputation. The hostages (not yet prisoners) attended the royal entry of Charles VII in Rouen on 10 November 1449.<sup>41</sup> A miniature in Martial d'Auvergne's *Vigiles de Charles VII* features Talbot and the wife of Jean d'Orléans, count of Dunois, better known as the Bâtard of Orléans, side by side, in the background, watching a staged performance, during the entry of Charles VII, from a window at the second storey of a nearby building.<sup>42</sup> According to the chronicler Mathieu d'Escouchy, Charles had given Talbot an elegant robe that he was wearing on that occasion.<sup>43</sup> The English captain was kept in captivity in the castle of Dreux, where he enjoyed the service of a 'mercenary' priest, acting as a personal chaplain.<sup>44</sup> A second miniature in Auvergne's *Vigiles* portrays the English captain kneeling before the French

king.<sup>45</sup> It illustrates the departure of Talbot, released on 10 July 1450. He was to embark on a pilgrimage to Rome. Auvergne extols the generosity of Charles VII, on that occasion. The French king, according to him, lavished Talbot with gifts and ordered the *bonnes villes* where he was to stop by on his way to Rome to prepare a feast for him. This, for Auvergne, was the 'sign of a debonair king,' who matched with gentleness the harshness of the enemy.<sup>46</sup>

The tale of the captivity and liberation of Talbot reads as a rich and demonstrative display of chivalric values: honour, largesse, obedience and piety. Yet all this pageantry (whether or not it was true) should not conceal the hefty price for the release of the English captain: that is, the surrender of the town and fortress of Falaise, of which he was both lord and captain.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Richard Gower, another hostage-turned-prisoner, was eventually handed over to his father Thomas, as part of an agreement for the surrender of the town of Cherbourg of which he was captain.<sup>48</sup> Such an operation contributed to the swift recovery of the duchy of Normandy on which the French government capitalised to prove the righteousness of Charles VII's cause. So swift indeed was the reconquest that it could only be understood if God was on Charles's side, as Guillaume Cousinot highlighted in a letter to the count of Foix toward mid-October 1449.<sup>49</sup> Yet, the decision regarding the liberation of Talbot was not unanimous, according to the Norman chronicler, Robert Blondel, a fierce critic of the English. Some royal counsellors feared that his courage, his military skill and the confidence that the English soldiers had in Talbot could reverse the English fortunes of war, and that he would come back to France with a large army in a spirit of revenge. However, Blondel pursues, the king replied to these worriers that, in short, it was unworthy of a king to be afraid of the ferocity of a single man.<sup>50</sup>

This episode could have been regarded as a figment of Blondel's imagination, a mere device to enhance the sense of honour of Charles VII, if this issue was not also raised, more subtly, in the treaty for the surrender of Falaise. Clause 4 anticipated that Talbot would be relieved from his obligations as prisoner provided that 'he commits to go on a pilgrimage to Rome before going to England, as he told Charles VII on several occasions that this was his will, devotion and intention.'<sup>51</sup> As it was phrased, this clause suggests that the French king merely acceded to a pious request of Talbot. Its inclusion in the treaty, most certainly on the initiative of the French, however, legally bound Talbot to perform this religious vow. It would be naïve to believe that Charles was concerned about the piety of his enemy, of course. The purpose of this clause was temporarily to remove the English captain from the battlefield. The pretext of the pilgrimage had the merit of leaving Charles VII's honour completely intact—he did not show any fear toward this single combatant—and, at the same time, of heightening the honour of the devout knight who went on pilgrimage to Rome for the jubilee of 1450. More than a gloss, honour appears here as a shared value which channelled behaviours between enemies.

Honour is pushed to the background for the fate of the other seven hostages who, as it turned out, ended it up in the hands of Charles VII's lieutenants. Intricate ownership rights over four prisoners—i.e., Henry Redford, Richard Frogenhale, John Ormond, and George Neville—came to light in the spectacular downfall of Jacques Coeur, the infamous *Argentier* of Charles VII. Coming from a rich merchant background, Coeur rose to prominence at the service of the king in the 1430s and 1440s, assuming the prestigious offices of Master of the Mint in 1436 and steward of the royal expenditure from 1438.<sup>52</sup> The surrender of Rouen and the royal entry in 1449, in which he was invited to take part are supposed to have marked the climax of his career.<sup>53</sup> Coeur took an active part in the reconquest of Normandy, up until the very end. It is he, indeed, who negotiated and obtained the surrender of Cherbourg, in August 1450; releasing his prisoner, Richard Gower, as part of the agreement. Less than a year after, however, Coeur found himself charged on multiple counts, including poisoning and embezzlement. He was arrested on 31 July 1451, and eventually condemned, two years later, in June 1453. The sentence pronounced against him included exile, a huge fine and the confiscation of all his properties. Coeur had amassed prodigious wealth during the time of his long career. Charles VII ordered his *procureur général* Jean Dauvet to proceed to the liquidation of all the properties of the *Argentier*. This was a huge task which took no less than five years to be carried out. Fortunately, Dauvet kept a detailed record of his work in the form of a journal which has survived.<sup>54</sup> The rights over the four prisoners were part of the assets to liquidate.

We know from a letter of Dunois copied in Dauvet's journal and from other sources that the ownership of the prisoners was shared out between Jacques Coeur, the Bâtard d'Orléans, and Pierre de Brézé, great seneschal of Normandy: Roos and Frogenhale were given to Brézé; Redford, to Dunois; Gower, to Coeur; Neville was co-owned by Dunois (25%) and Coeur (75%), who also shared property rights over Ormond, according to an inverted ratio: 75% to Dunois and 25% to Coeur. The case of Thomas Dacres, as far as I know, has left no trace in the sources.<sup>55</sup> A default of payment by Henry Redford led to complaint by Dunois and a subsequent renegotiation of these shares (or some of them), which suggests that the initial acquisition and division of these shares was collegial, the *Argentier* possibly acting as a manager. This, in turn, indicates that either the hostages-turned-prisoners had been given by Charles VII to his trusted lieutenants in reward for their good services, or they were used by the French king to pay back loans made by the three men, for we know that Charles had to borrow heavily to wage this war.<sup>56</sup>

Nowhere else is the association of prisoners of war with valuable commodities as striking as in the fate of George Neville. He was a teenager of barely thirteen years old at the time of his surrender to the French, the only surviving son and heir of Edward Neville, Lord Bergavenny.<sup>57</sup> More importantly, he was the son of Elizabeth Beauchamp (who died in 1448), daughter

and heiress of Richard Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny and earl of Worcester, killed at Baugé in 1421 and, of especial significance, daughter and eventual heiress of Isabel Despenser (d. 1439). As such Neville was coheir and rival to the other daughter, Anne Beauchamp wife of Richard Neville, earl of Warwick. Neville was yet to be ransomed at the time of Dauvet's enquiry in the mid-1450s. In an attempt to facilitate the liquidation of Coeur's assets, the attorney worked out an arrangement with Dunois to acquire, for the king, the full ownership of Neville.<sup>58</sup> An agreement was made on 8 September 1456, according to which Charles VII was to give 3,000 *écus* to Dunois on top of the 25% share which Coeur had in Ormond in return for Dunois's 25% share in Neville. (It is interesting to note, in passing, how much higher was the estimate of Neville's financial means compared to Ormond's.)

The French had no intention to use Neville to secure political advantages, nor to ransom him, nor even to keep him. Dauvet underlined the 'danger of death and other inconveniences to keep for a long time the said prisoner.'<sup>59</sup> Acting on Charles's behest, the attorney proceeded to the immediate resale of Neville, through a system of private auction. Surviving evidence of auction generally concerned the sales of booty only.<sup>60</sup> There is no reason to believe, however, that it had not been applied in the past to prisoners, too.<sup>61</sup> Dauvet had contacted several potential buyers, 'lords chieftains of war and others' manifestly belonging to the higher levels of the military society. The highest bidder was the French captain, Jean de Bueil, who offered to pay 24,000 *écus* for the prisoner. 'I found nobody who would pay more than Monseigneur de Bueil,' Dauvet recorded in his journal. The value of the prisoner had sharply dropped by then. By way of comparison, Ormond's ransom was set at 15,000 *saluts* or £2,500, in 1451, plus an extra £500 for the costs of custody, in 1452.<sup>62</sup> In other words, 25% of Neville's ransom was worth no more than 33% of Ormond's (costs included) in 1456. The prisoner was sold to de Bueil.

The next time we hear about Neville is in April 1462, as a direct result of the accession to the throne of King Louis XI (25 July 1461). Many close counsellors and trusted officers of Charles VII found themselves in trouble at the beginning of the new reign. Louis XI asked de Bueil to provide evidence of his rights over Neville. The threat of his prisoner's confiscation was tangible in de Bueil's reply, who begged the king to take into consideration the great costs that he had incurred in buying him: 'if your pleasure is to take the said [prisoner], please give me reasonable compensation; for otherwise I would be ruined, given what he cost me, as you will be able to see in a schedule that I have handed over to Jacques Tiercelin.'<sup>63</sup> Six years had passed since de Bueil had acquired Neville and he was yet to get any return on his investment. Evidence provided by de Bueil regarding his ownership of Neville bore royal scrutiny in 1462, and the French captain remained in possession of his prisoner.

Pierre de Brézé was another trusted officer of Charles VII who suffered even more from the vindictiveness of Louis XI. He was thrown in the prison



of the castle of Loches for some time in 1462, until he was released through the intermediary of Margaret of Anjou.<sup>64</sup> George Chastelain staged in his chronicle a pitiful meeting between Brézé (Chastelain's former patron)<sup>65</sup> and his prisoner, the esquire, Richard Roos, before the seneschal surrendered to Louis XI.<sup>66</sup> Brézé, according to him, asked advice from Roos in this time of uttermost adversity. Roos, we learn in this passage, had then been detained at Nogent-le-Roi for more than ten years. He eventually regained his freedom by June 1463, possibly through the intervention of his elder brother, Thomas Roos, 9th Lord Roos.<sup>67</sup>

Neville, with regards to him, turned out to spend another five years in captivity before an arrangement was ultimately made for the payment of a ransom. This was thanks to the intervention of his cousin, Richard Neville, earl of Warwick, who seized the opportunity of his embassy to the French king in Rouen, in May 1467, to organise the liberation of George.<sup>68</sup> A contract involving Warwick, Neville and de Bueil was sealed in the Norman capital in the following month.<sup>69</sup> Neville appears in the document as 'formerly your prisoner,' whom Bueil had agreed to set free, at Warwick's request. This marked the end of a seventeen-year-long captivity for Neville; the young teenager at the time of his surrender was then thirty years old. The payment of a sum of 21,000 *écus d'or* was to be paid in three instalments over three years. George Neville, archbishop of York, and John Neville, earl of Northumberland, Neville's first cousins (but nonetheless, his rivals), were expected to act as sureties. The payment of the whole sum still remained outstanding some ten years later in January 1478, when an authenticated copy of the original contract was made.

John Ormond, like Roos, was second in line to succeed to his family title. He reminded the king in 1452 how 'your said servaunt is a younger brother and hath only litill lyvelode to relief him.'<sup>70</sup> Nothing, at that time, could have predicted that he would eventually be recognised as earl of Ormond and Wiltshire, in 1474.<sup>71</sup> His well-documented fate highlights both his difficulties and proactivity in raising the money for his large ransom. An early attempt to gather 15,000 *écus* (£2,500) for his ransom was made by friends and relatives, on 2 March 1451.<sup>72</sup> It failed. Within the same month, Ormond was granted a license to trade all sorts of merchandises with France.<sup>73</sup> It was the first of a series of licenses and safe-conducts granted to Ormond by both French and English authorities to raise the money for his ransom through trade. This was a demanding business which seems to have required his personal involvement. A safe-conduct delivered to him in June 1452 reveals that he had been released on parole, some hostages standing in prison in his stead.<sup>74</sup> A licence granted to him at the same time reveals that friends and relatives had given him commodities which he hoped to trade 'beyond the mountains' to the straits of Gibraltar.<sup>75</sup> Such trading activities in times of open war were naturally exposed to danger. Dunois complained to a Spanish ambassador that a ship belonging to Ormond trading under the protection of a safe conduct delivered by himself and Jean de Bueil had been robbed

of a cargo worth no less than 6,000 *écus* by a Spanish fleet in the Mouth of Seine, in April 1454.<sup>76</sup> In addition, a commission issued by the English crown reported about a month later, in May 1454, that another ship which traded goods for the payment of Ormond's ransom had been despoiled by men of Calais with a cargo estimated much more modestly at £120.<sup>77</sup>

Only 1,800 *écus* were left to be paid at that time. The settlement of this remaining sum was to be rebated on the ransom of a French knight, Olivier de Coëtivy, captured in Bordeaux, in 1452. The Talbots acted as intermediaries in this operation.<sup>78</sup> The contract that Coëtivy sealed with his master John Talbot, second earl of Shrewsbury, on 15 May 1454—his father had perished a year previously at the battle of Castillon (17 July 1453)—anticipated that the prisoner acquired, probably from Dunois, and handed over to Talbot an obligation of 1,800 *écus* 'for the remaining and entire payment of the finance of the said Ormond.'<sup>79</sup> The feud between the two families, the Talbot and the Ormond, seems to have been extinguished at that time.<sup>80</sup>

The examples of Neville, Roos and Ormond are characterised by relatively long captivities and the non-involvement of the English crown. The last two cases show a different picture. Together with Talbot, Henry Redford, Richard Frogenhale and Thomas Dacre formed the group of hostages held as guarantees for the surrender of the Norman towns only, and not for the 50,000 *écus*. The hostages had apparently been divided up in two groups on the basis of their importance in the eyes of Somerset and the English authorities. Or, at least, it is what the strong governmental support from which Redford and Frogenhale, two trusted and experienced officers, suggests.

Redford was made *bailli* of Rouen in October 1449, right in the middle of the crisis in the Norman capital.<sup>81</sup> He was handed over as hostage on 30 October 1449 and had already regained his freedom by June 1450, when he was entrusted with the command of a section of the garrison of Caen.<sup>82</sup> The English knight seems to have been released thanks to Talbot, who appears in Dauvet's journal as pledge for the payment of a 6,000 *saluts d'or* ransom.<sup>83</sup> In June 1451, Henry VI granted Redford bonds for the payment of the ransom of the duke of Orléans to the value of the whole amount of his own ransom.<sup>84</sup> It was not the first time that the ransom of an English prisoner was to be deducted from the immense ransom of the duke of Orléans.<sup>85</sup> How did this work? In short, Guillaume de Harcourt, count of Tancarville, had committed to pay 6,000 *écus* out of the ransom of the duke of Orléans in 1444, and sealed an obligation of payment which was preserved by the English exchequer.<sup>86</sup> This obligation was handed over to Redford on Henry VI's behest, so that he could claim the money from de Harcourt. An entry in the Treaty Rolls of the English Chancery reveals that Redford had received the money from the hands of de Harcourt in July 1451. It therefore remained for Redford to pay his ransom to Dunois. But, as we have seen, Dunois complained that Redford failed to honour his obligation and, as a result, brought an action against Talbot who acted as Redford's surety.<sup>87</sup> Where the money went, how it was used is a mystery. Redford escaped his

obligation and was later entrusted with the office of mayor of Bordeaux in 1452, following the English recovery of the Gascon capital.<sup>88</sup>

Besides holding the office of *bailli* of Harcourt, Frogenhale was also one of Somerset's chamberlains, described by the French ambassadors at Bonport in July 1449 as 'the principal in his household, the closest to his person.'<sup>89</sup> The exact date or circumstances of his release are unknown but he was at large by May 1451, when he was appointed to a commission in England whose purpose was to arrest anyone who contravened the statute of Leicester (1414) in entering Wales or Ireland.<sup>90</sup> Frogenhale presented himself as 'still' a prisoner in a petition to Henry VI, sent by May 1453. An explicit reference is made to the fact that he was not, however, in captivity, for—and that was the purpose of his petition—he was at risk of having to deliver himself to the French again if the king did not help him to pay his ransom.<sup>91</sup> Either we must assume that Frogenhale had been recaptured and released on parole between May 1451 and May 1453 or that he had been enjoying a long parole after Rouen, providing strong sureties. This petition also sheds light on Somerset's early attempt to help his detainee out of prison. The duke and gentlemen of Kent had granted Frogenhale 1,100 marks, out of the proceeds of the capture of Jack Cade, toward the payment of his 2,500 marks (or £1,666) ransom. However, Frogenhale complained that the sums, paid in tallies, could not be levied by Whitsuntide (20 May 1453) when the payment of his ransom was due. Henry VI cancelled the tallies and granted him instead 1,100 marks of subsidy on wool.<sup>92</sup> Frogenhale's commitment to participate in a prospective expedition to Gascony, in July 1453, must have played a part in the decision of the king.<sup>93</sup>

## Conclusion

The well-documented case of Rouen in 1449 offers a sharp and original insight into the normative framework in which, primarily, hostageship and, secondarily, surrender worked, despite its exceptionality (i.e., the failure of a high profile surrender treaty).<sup>94</sup> Individual negotiations between enemies and the fulfilment of promises were at the heart of the practice of surrender of places in the late Middle Ages. This dialogue was made possible and shaped, at the same time, by a system of shared values and principles. Honour, in this system, was both a language and a core principle which found legal grounds in the terms of the treaty. Exchanges of oath—or words of honour—and the delivery of hostages, acted as safeguards in a context of war which left relatively little room for any formal legal action in court to be brought against the enemy. That hostageship had become a custom in the process of surrender is a powerful sign of trust (rather than distrust) between enemies and suggests a general respect of rules.

The collapse of the treaty of surrender of Rouen did not bring violence. The explicit shift from the status of hostage to that of prisoner of war reveals the extent of the legal confines in which contemporaries operated or wanted to operate. Of course, the status of prisoner of war did not have much to do

with humanitarian rights, apart from the fact that prisoners were expected to have their life spared. The status of prisoner of war is better defined by the value of the prisoner in the eyes of his masters and the rights of ownership that the latter enjoyed over the former. The deep-seated, customary practice of ransoming—taken in its broader sense: that is, also including ‘strategic exchanges’—gave the hostages of Rouen and potentially any hostage an intrinsic value outside the terms of the agreements. This prospect in itself, leaving aside any moral argument, must have acted as a powerful deterrent against any killings.

From the perspective of the hostage-turned-prisoner, it is fascinating to observe the marked shift in responsibility from public to private sphere. Somerset acted as a lieutenant of Henry VI. Yet once the treaty had collapsed, the hostages paid the consequences as individuals. The crown was not held by any obligation toward prisoners and, as we have seen, dispensed its help parsimoniously and pragmatically. Agents of the crown working in England and France upon whom the Lancastrian government relied for the exercise of power at the local level, such as Talbot, Froghale and Redford, were more likely candidates to receive assistance from the crown than Neville (a young boy), Roos or Ormond. This echoes Maurice Keen’s observation that the late medieval soldier ‘still fought as individual, and rights were acquired by and against him personally, and not against the side for which he fought,’ an observation which had long been overshadowed by the paradigm of the rise of modern state in the late Middle Ages.<sup>95</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Maurice Keen, *The Laws of War in the Later Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1965), 23–44. The research for this paper was carried out while I was a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow. I am greatly indebted to the Trust. The writing up of it has also received funding from the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013 — MSCA-COFUND) under grant agreement n°245743 — Post-doctoral programme Braudel-IFER-FMSH, in collaboration with the Labex Patrima of the Université de Cergy-Pontoise. I would also like to thank Anne Curry, Michael Hicks, Nicholas Kingwell, Katherine Weikert and Matthew Bennett for their careful reading and advice on earlier drafts both as regards content and language.
- 2 Keen, *Laws*, 24.
- 3 See for the conquest of Normandy 1417–19 Bertrand Schnerb, ‘Sauver les Meubles. A Propos de Quelques Traités de Capitulation de Forteresses du Début du XVe Siècle,’ in *Frieden Schaffen und sich Verteidigen im Spätmittelalter*, ed. Gisela Naegle (Munich: Oldenbourg Verl., 2012), 215–66. A glance at the list of the Norman towns, cities and fortresses retaken by Charles VII during the reconquest of Normandy (July 1449– July 1450), as provided in William Worcester’s papers, also shows the overwhelming dominance of negotiated surrender. Stevenson, *Letters*, ii/2, 619–34.
- 4 Kosto, 99–110.
- 5 Michael K. Jones, ‘Somerset, York and the Wars of the Roses,’ *English Historical Review* 104 (1989): 285–307.

- 6 A descriptive account of the siege is provided in Gaston du Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII*, 6 vols. (Paris: A. Picard, 1881–91), V, 15–19. A broader English perspective can be found in Jones, ‘Somerset,’ 302–6.
- 7 Eugène Cosneau, ed., *Les Grands Traités de la Guerre de Cent Ans* (Paris: Picard, 1889), 154–71; André Bossuat, *Perrinet Gressart et François Surienne, Agents de l’Angleterre* (Paris: E. Droz, 1936), 307.
- 8 French deliberations and response to the English ambassadors are published as appendices in Mathieu d’Escouchy, *Chronique*, ed. Gaston du Fresne de Beaucourt, 3 vols. (Paris: Vve J. Renouard, 1863–4), III, 245–51, no. 201, 202.
- 9 Several copies of the treaty have survived, which do not differ widely. Some copies seem to include draft articles which had been subsequently withdrawn. For convenience’s sake, unless otherwise stated, I refer in this study to the copy included in a collection of documents relating to the quarrel between France and England, 1308–1531, preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France [hereafter, BnF] in Paris: BnF, Mss. fr. 4054, fol. 158r–9r, and published as appendices in Escouchy, *Chronique*, III, 358–64, no. 13.
- 10 Keen, *Laws*, 128.
- 11 Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 208–9.
- 12 Kosto, 104, 110.
- 13 Escouchy, *Chronique*, iii, 359–60.
- 14 The identification of these hostages has raised issues in the past. Mistakes slipped in the most detailed studies. See for instance, Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI. The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461* (London: Benn, 1981), 517, 545. These individuals will be more properly identified in the second part of this chapter.
- 15 Escouchy, *Chronique*, iii, 360.
- 16 Escouchy, *Chronique*, iii, 360–1.
- 17 In this respect, the case of Rouen provides a very fitting illustration for Hans Henning-Kortüm’s approach of medieval surrender as a power relationship, the final agreement reflecting ‘the expression of the superiority and of the inferiority respectively of the two sides involved in such a process.’ Hans Henning-Kortüm, ‘Introduction: Surrender in Medieval Times,’ in *How Fighting Ends: A History of Surrender*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and Hew Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54.
- 18 See College of Arms, MS Arundel XLVIII, fol. 226–7v published in Stevenson, *Letters*, ii/2. 608. (The copy published in Escouchy’s chronicle that is used as reference in this chapter is a copy of a ratification by Charles VII.)
- 19 Escouchy, *Chronique*, i, 230.
- 20 Jean Chartier, *Chronique de Charles VII, Roi de France*, ed. Auguste Vallet de Viriville, 3 vols. (Paris: Jannet, 1858), iii, 7.
- 21 Escouchy, *Chronique*, iii, 360.
- 22 See Giles le Bouvier, dit le héraut Berry, *Les Chroniques du Roi Charles VII*, ed. Henri Couteault, Léonce Celier and Marie-Henriette Jullien de Pommerol (Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1979), 320–1; and the illuminating testimony of a surviving fragment of the register of the chapter of the cathedral of Rouen. Bibliothèque Municipale de Rouen, Y 134, fol. 12–25; published in André Pottier, ‘Réduction de la Ville de Rouen en 1449,’ *Revue Rétrospective Normande* 3 (1842): 8–10.
- 23 Robert Blondel, *Oeuvres*, ed. Alexandre Héron, 2 vols. (Rouen: A. Lestringant, 1891–3), ii, 152–3, 336; Chartier, *Chronique*, ii, 157; Berry, *Les Chroniques*, 321; Berry Herald, ‘Recouvrement de Normandie,’ in *Narratives of the Expulsion of the English from Normandy*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Longman, 1863), 306.

- 24 On English finances, see Griffiths, *Henry VI*, 376–401.
- 25 Anthony T. Kronman, 'Contract Law and the State of Nature,' *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization* 1 (1985): 14–19; Kosto, 41–5. The point on law and honour is mine.
- 26 On the importance of words of honour from an anthropological perspective, see Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status,' in *Honour and Shame: the Values of Mediterranean Society*, ed. John G. Peristiany (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965), 30–6.
- 27 Chartier, *Chronique*, ii. 171–2.
- 28 Orders or, at least, a strong incentive to resist came from England, according to the duke of York, who reminded the English Parliament in 1450 that the surrender of Honfleur had been 'retardyd' by a letter of the king: *Paston*, i. 106. The English crown had sealed indentures with several captains on 24 September 1449, for a total of 3,095 troops to be sent to France for six months. They were expected to muster at Portsmouth on 22 October. Anne Curry, 'Military Organisation in Lancastrian Normandy, 1422–1450,' 2 vols. (Ph.D. dissertation, Teesside Polytechnic, 1985), i. 55. Henry VI ordered 20 marks to be paid to John Neuport for his expenses in having carried barley, malt and wheat to Honfleur and Harfleur on 6 December 1415. TNA, E 404/66/95.
- 29 For an example of treason charges brought against a surrendering captain in 1428, see Christopher T. Allmand and Charles A.J. Armstrong, ed., *English Suits before the Parlement of Paris, 1420–1436* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1982), 220–30.
- 30 Kosto, 214–18.
- 31 Kosto, 39.
- 32 Kosto, 51–2.
- 33 Kosto, 19.
- 34 Kosto, 44.
- 35 For the latter practice, see Rémy Ambühl, *Prisoners of War in the Hundred Years War: Ransom Culture in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 238–9.
- 36 'Parquoy le susdit sire de Talbot et les autres ostaiges demourerent encore prisonniers de guerre du roy . . .': Chartier, *Chronique*, ii. 172.
- 37 For Kosto, in general, the distinction was clear in the medieval mind: 12–14.
- 38 On Chartier, see Gilette Tyl-Labory, 'Jean Chartier,' in *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises: Le Moyen Âge*, ed. Geneviève Hasenohr and Michel Zink (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1992), 761–2.
- 39 Kosto, 12–3.
- 40 Any holder of a prisoner, whether he had captured him or acquired him from a third party, became his master upon taking his oath to be a good and loyal prisoner. Masters enjoyed property rights over their prisoners, but became mere creditors once the price of the ransom had been agreed. See, Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 19–20. On contracts and prisoners of war, see 39–45.
- 41 See for instance, Chartier, *Chronique*, ii. 170 and Berry, 'Recouvrement,' 319.
- 42 BnF, Mss. Fr. 5054, fol. 185r. (>1472)
- 43 Escouchy, *Chronique*, i. 230.
- 44 Archives Nationales (Paris), JJ 191, no. 33 (23 July 1454). Captivity in Dreux is also attested by Chartier, *Chronique*, ii. 226 and Berry, 'Recouvrement', 362
- 45 BnF, Mss. Fr. 5054, fol. 203v.
- 46 BnF, Mss. Fr. 5054, fol. 203v.
- 47 Stevenson, *Letters*, ii/2. 735–42. (10 July 1450)
- 48 The terms for the surrender of Cherbourg are included in an order of payment to Jacques Cœur in December 1450. BnF, Mss. Fr. 20616, fol. 5, ed. in André Plaisie, *La Délivrance de Cherbourg et du Clos du Cotentin à la Fin de la Guerre de Cent Ans* (Cherbourg: 'La Presse de la Manche', 1989), 180–2.



- 49 The letter, whose provenance is unknown, is published in Beaucourt, *Histoire*, v. 437–44 (October 1449).
- 50 Blondel, *Oeuvres*, ii. 250–2 and 386–7.
- 51 Stevenson, *Letters*, ii/2. 738.
- 52 On Coeur, see Michel Mollat du Jourdin, *Jacques Coeur ou l'Esprit d'Entreprise au XVe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1988).
- 53 Mollat, *Jacques Coeur*, 66.
- 54 Michel Mollat du Jourdin, ed., *Les Affaires de Jacques Coeur. Journal du procureur Dauvet, Procès-verbaux de Séquestre et d'Adjudication*, 2 vols. (Paris: A. Colin, 1952–3).
- 55 A declaration of Richard Fiennes in 1458 reveals that Joan Dacre was the daughter of Thomas first born son of Thomas, 6th Lord Dacre, who had recently passed away. Joan, and her husband Richard Fiennes, inherited the title of Lord Dacre directly from her grandfather, suggesting that by then Thomas, her father, the hostage of Rouen, was no longer. *CPR 1452–61*, 460 (7 Nov 1458). The issue is not discussed in *Peerage*, iv. col. 6–7.
- 56 Mollat du Jourdin, *Jacques Coeur*, 222, 228, 238.
- 57 Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity. A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 439–46; Michael Hicks, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 297. See also Thomas B. Pugh, 'Neville Edward, First Baron Bergavenny (d. 1476),' in *ONDB*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19929>.
- 58 Mollat du Jourdin, *Les Affaires*, 483–4. See also Camille Favre and Léon Lecestre, eds, *Le Jouvencel*, 2 vols. (Paris: Renouard, 1887–9), clxxi–clxxiii and Malcolm Vale, *Charles VII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1974), 134–5.
- 59 Mollat du Jourdin, *Les Affaires*, 484.
- 60 See for instance, the recent study of Valérie Toureille, *Robert de Sarrebrück ou l'Honneur d'un Ecorcheur (v. 1400–v. 1462)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 166–71.
- 61 A system of auction could explain the sharing out of the prisoners after Agincourt. Rémy Ambühl, 'Le Sort des Prisonniers d'Azincourt (1415),' *Revue du Nord* 89 (2007): 762–71.
- 62 *CCR 1447–54*, 266–7 (2 March 1451); *TNA*, C 76/134, m. 2 (23 June 1452).
- 63 Letter of Jean de Bueil to Louis XI (BnF, Mss. fr. 20428, fol. 70), published in Favre and Lecestre, *Le Jouvencel*, ii. 405–6 (25 April 1462).
- 64 See the notice on John A. Wagner, 'Brézé, Pierre de, Seneschal of Normandy (c. 1408–1465),' in *The Encyclopedia of the Wars of the Roses*, ed. John A. Wagner (Santa Barbara, CA, 2001), 37–8.
- 65 On the relationship between Chastellain and Brézé, see Graeme Small, *George Chastellain and the Shaping of Valois Burgundy* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 42–50.
- 66 Roos made two appearances: George Chastellain, *Œuvres*, ed. Joseph Kervyn de Lettenhove, 4 vols. (Brussels: Heussner, 1863–6), iv. 178 and 190. On 'Richard Roos, esquire,' see Ethel Seaton, *Sir Richard Roos, Lancastrian poet, c.1410–1482* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1961), 35–42. See also Colin Richmond, 'Thomas Malory and the Pastons,' in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meale (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 199–201.
- 67 Seaton, *Richard Roos*, 38.
- 68 On Warwick and the embassy to France, see the notice of Anthony J. Pollard, 'Neville, Richard, sixteenth earl of Warwick and sixth earl of Salisbury [called the Kingmaker] (1428–1471),' in *ODNB*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19955>.
- 69 British Library, Add. Ch. 12453, published in Favre and Lecestre, *Le Jouvencel*, ii. 413–5 (16 June 1467/1 January 1478).
- 70 *TNA*, C 49/32/10.



- 71 On his life and career, see Steven G. Ellis, 'Butler, John, sixth earl of Ormond (d. 1476/7), magnate,' ODNB, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/4195>.
- 72 CCR 1447–54, 266–7.
- 73 TNA, C 76/133, m. 10 (18 March 1451).
- 74 TNA, C 76/134, m. 8 (23 June 1452).
- 75 TNA, C 76/134, m. 2 (23 June 1452).
- 76 BnF, Mss. fr. 4054, fol. 166 (April 1454).
- 77 CPR 1452–61, 173 and 437 (17 May 1454, April 1458).
- 78 On ransom brokerage see Michael K. Jones, 'Ransom Brokerage in the Fifteenth Century,' in *Guerre et Société en France, en Angleterre et en Bourgogne, XIVe-XVe siècles*, ed. Philippe Contamine, Charles Giry-Deloison and Maurice H. Keen (Villeneuve-d'Ascq: Centre d'Histoire de la Région du Nord et de l'Europe du Nord-Ouest, 1991), 221–35. The practice is revisited in Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 150–7.
- 79 Paul Marchegay, 'La Rançon d'Olivier de Coëtivy, Seigneur de Taillebourg et Sénéchal de Guyenne, 1451–1477,' *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes* 38 (1877): 11.
- 80 On the feud, see Anthony J. Pollard, *John Talbot and the War in France, 1427–1453* (Barnsley: Pen and Sword Military, 2005), 10–1.
- 81 Gustave Dupont-Ferrier, ed., *Gallia Regia, ou état des officiers royaux des bailliages et des sénéchaussées, de 1328 à 1515*, 7 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, Bibliothèque nationale, 1942–1966), no. 18925 (7 October 1449).
- 82 Victor Hunger, *Le Siège et la Prise de Caen par Charles VII en 1450* (Paris: Impr. de Champon et Pailhé, 1912), 13.
- 83 Mollat du Jourdin, *Les affaires*, 108.
- 84 TNA, E 404/67/185 (17 June 1451), 215 (24 July 1451).
- 85 Ambühl, *Prisoners*, 150–1.
- 86 TNA, C 76/133, m. 8; published in *Foed.*, xi. 286–7 (24 July 1451).
- 87 Mollat du Jourdin, *Les Affaires*, 108.
- 88 TNA, C 61/139, m. 5 (5 December 1452).
- 89 Diplomatic correspondence between French and English (2 July 1449) published in Stevenson, *Narratives of the Expulsion*, 493; quoted in Michael K. Jones, 'The Beaufort Family and the War in France, 1421–1450' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bristol, 1983), 328 and n.3.
- 90 CPR 1446–1452, 577 (12 May 1451).
- 91 TNA, SC 8/ 87/4217 (1453).
- 92 Cancellation of the tallies: TNA, E 404/69/180 (12 July 1453).
- 93 Jones, 'The Beaufort,' 278 n.3.
- 94 Some recent scholarship has depicted late medieval warfare as acutely cynical, pragmatic and strategic. See, for instance, the contribution of Rory Cox, 'A Law of War? English Protection and Destruction of Ecclesiastical Property during the Fourteenth Century,' *English Historical Review* 128 (2013): 1381–1417, in which the author denies the concept of 'laws of war' (or law of war) to late medieval conduct of war.
- 95 Keen, *Laws*, 24.

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